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ABSTRACT

This study examines qualifications available to initial entrants to tertiary sector/clerical and commercial occupations in three CEDEFOP (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) member states--the United Kingdom, France, and West Germany. (The goal is to ascertain the feasibility of establishing equivalence of qualifications between member states in this occupational area.) Three monographs, one on each member state, are presented, each divided into two parts. Part 1 considers the relevant tertiary sector occupations in their institutional context and describes the qualifications themselves. Part 2 presents an appraisal of the status of these qualifications in relation to occupational and labor market development and change. The final part of the study is a synthesis report that is concerned with the extent to which equivalence between the three member states in respect of these qualifications can be said to exist, together with recommendations as to how progress might be made in this area. A bibliography for each member state monograph is appended. (YLB)

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CEDEFOP Document

Clerical and commercial sector qualifications in the United Kingdom, France and Germany

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

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Clerical and commercial sector qualifications in the United Kingdom, France and Germany

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INTRODUCTION

This study was undertaken at the request of CEDEFOP with the aim of examining qualifications available to initial entrants to tertiary sector/clerical and commercial occupations in three member states, U.K., France and Germany. The educational level of the qualifications was defined as being below that of qualifications leading to university entrance. From this initial examination it was hoped to ascertain the feasibility of attempting to establish equivalence of qualifications between member states in this occupational area. In addition, CEDEFOP requested that special attention should be paid to the impact of new technology on traditional definitions of occupational areas in this sector and on courses of training and qualifications available. This meant that the qualifications available in the three member states had to be considered from two different angles. Firstly, for each country there had to be a description of the institutional context and of the qualifications themselves. Secondly, a dynamic appraisal had to be given of the changing value of the qualifications described as a result of occupational change, especially that resulting from new technology.

The requirement to approach the qualifications in each member-state from these two angles explains the structure of the three monographs on France, Germany and the U.K. Each monograph is divided into two parts, and for each member-state, Part I considers the relevant tertiary sector occupations in their institutional context and Part II presents an appraisal of their status in

relation to occupational and labour-market development and change. The final part of this report consists of a synthesis report which is concerned with the extent to which equivalence between the three member-states in respect of these qualifications can be said to exist together with recommendations as to how progress might be made in this area.

Since it was envisaged that national experts in the field of tertiary sector qualifications would be wishing to read only the information relating to the two member-states not their own, each national monograph has been written as a self-contained entity which can be read without reference to the other two, and without a prior knowledge of the national system of education. Similarly, it was felt that some readers might wish only to consult the summary/ synthesis report and this too has been written as far as it is possible so as to recapitulate for the three member-states individual points made in the national monographs. Thus the synthesis report can also be read without prior consultation of the national monographs. At the same time, it was felt that some readers of this report might wish to compare for themselves various key aspects of qualifications structure across member-states. For this reason, each national monograph has a similar structure so that for example, the validation of qualifications is discussed in the French monograph in Par. 1.4, in the German monograph in Par. 2.3 and in the U.K. monograph in Par 2.4.3. The synthesis section recapitulates these points in Par. 1.5, Validating and examining bodies for courses of training in France, Germany and the U.K.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge gratefully the generous help and guidance given by national experts and practitioners in the field of clerical and commercial training in the three member-states, in the preparation of this study. I would like also to thank Professor Prais of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research and Madame M Pierret of CEDEFOP for their support and advice.

NATIONAL MONOGRAPH: FRANCE

Part One

1. The courses of training - definition and description

1.1 Problems of job description

Once the decision has been made to limit the study of courses of training leading to a Level V type qualification[1] and once the sectors of activity have also been decided upon, the 'target jobs' of the courses of training identify themselves, since in each type of activity different jobs are described in terms of the level of qualification required. The description of each type of job considered in this part of the study is the generic description constructed by the French careers services to present the world of work to those about to choose a course of training.[2] The term used in this study to denote these generic descriptions is 'target jobs' which should be distinguished from 'jobs in real time' i.e. the employment that actually follows from the course of training. One of the questions that this study will raise is whether the courses of training considered are designed to equip course participants for 'target jobs' or 'jobs in real time'. This is a question which has been carefully explored by CEREQ[3] who conclude that the practice of linking training with a job description does not enable progress to be made in updating training:-

> 'These job descriptions conceal changing realities, realities which, with the passage of time, not only vary in content but also in their interactions with each other'.[4]

CEDEFOP, in their project 'approximation of training levels' have also confronted this problem and conclude:-

> 'The training contents and/or examination requirements no longer provide the starting point: instead we proceed from the occupational requirements as they emerge in actual practice'. (5)

Nevertheless, job descriptions and the content of training are a reality which must enter into any consideration of equivalence of training levels - at least in the preliminary stages. As CEREQ states:-

> 'A training qualification can be defined as the link between the jobs organised by firms and the abilities given to individuals through experience and training'. (6)

This presentation of job descriptions and linked courses of training should therefore be understood as the study of the 'link' referred to above but a link which is understood to be part of the wider process of job definition and redefinition in response to the factors which exert pressure upon commerce and industry.

1.2 The job/qualification hierarchy

It was stated above that the matrix of training level and economic sector produced a definition of the jobs and associated courses of training with which this study is concerned. Let us now look at this process more closely. ONISEP defines 4 professional branches within the area of

the tertiary sector that concerns us:-[7]

levels of training	Banks	Insurance	Accountancy	Secretarial (industry & public sector)
Levels I and II		managerial posts		
Levels III and IV		executive posts		
Level V and Vbis		administrative/clerical posts		

1.3 Job descriptions by branch of activity

The hierarchy of educational levels corresponds in theory to the levels required for entry to the organisational hierarchy (although this may be modified by in-firm training). The job descriptions in the various branches for Level V entry are as follows:-

Banks[8]	Insurance	Accountancy/Secretarial/Business
cashier (caissier)	counter clerk (guichetier)	assistant book-keeper (aide-comptable)
clerk (employé de banque)	claims clerk (rédacteur sinistres)	book-keeper/secretary (secrétaire comptable)
counter clerk (guichetier)		book-keeper (comptable-mécanographe)
book-keeper		invoice clerk (dactylo-facturière)
typist (secrétaire comptable)		correspondance clerk (sténodactylo-correspondancière)
admin. assistant (adjoint administratif)		secretary (secrétaire sténodactylographe)
		commercial clerk (agent de commerce)

1.4 Courses of training: validating bodies

The dominant body in the field of validation, organization and teaching of courses of vocational training in France is the Ministry of Education. The Ministry provides and administers the entire national system of compulsory education plus 'long' general and technical education and 'short' vocational secondary education. The Ministry also provides courses of continuing training for adults using the system of GRETAs (Groupements d'établissements pour la formation continue) which are composed of existing educational establishments (vocational and technical lycées) which join together to

provide for the continuing training needs of their area. In consultation with the appropriate consultative committee the Ministry determines the syllabuses of vocational awards. Through control of teaching staff and the examination of vocational awards the Ministry confers the status of State qualification on the courses of training which it provides. The fact that extremely formal and complex wage agreements for different socio-economic groups are usually indexed to the State vocational certificates confers a value on these awards which is independent of their relevance or usefulness. This is the main reason why the State awards dominate the field and why the other two validating bodies which will be mentioned here are of relatively minor importance.

The qualifications validated by the Ministry of Education at Level V and in the branches relevant to this study are as follows:-

Banking

C.A.P. banking (banque) (9)

B.E.P. Insurance, banking and finance Option B (des professions de l'assurance, de la banque et de la Bourse Option B)(10)

Insurance

C.A.P. Insurance (employé d' assurances)

B.E.P. Insurance, banking and finance Option A (des professions de l'assurance, de la banque et de la bourse, Option A)

Accountancy/Book-keeping

C.A.P. clerk/book-keeper (employé de comptabilité)

B.E.P. book-keeper/data processing (mechanical) (comptable mécanographe)

Secretarial

C.A.P. shorthand-typist (sténodactylographe)

B.E.P. shorthand-typist/correspondence secretary (sténodactylographe-correspondancière)

B.E.P. commercial clerk (agent de commerce)

There are two important differences between the C.A.P. and the B.E.P. qualifications. The C.A.P. is recognised as requiring a lower level of overall performance than the B.E.P. and as developing a narrow set of skills at a fairly elementary level. The other important difference is that candidates for the C.A.P. must be at least 17 but there is no upper age limit and it is widely available to adults as part of continuing training.. The B.E.P. on the other hand, is recognised as being a more demanding course and as preparing not for the execution of specific tasks but for work in a particular area of commerce and industry. Unlike the C.A.P. the B.E.P. has an upper age limit of 20 years.

A.F.P.A. Association for the Vocational Training of Adults (Association pour la promotion de la Formation Professionnelle des Adultes)

A.F.P.A. is a semi-autonomous organization attached to

the Ministry of Labour. It provides most of the vocational training courses offered to the unemployed.

A.F.P.A. courses are only available to adults over the age of 19 and their awards do not have State recognition as do C.A.P. and B.E.P. Conflicting opinions were advanced as to the extent to which A.F.P.A. awards are valued by employers, the opinion of the A.F.P.A. representative was that they were not well-known to all employers. A.F.P.A. awards at Level V are the C.F.P. Certificate of Vocational Training (Certificat de Formation Professionnelle) available in thefollowing areas:-

(i) typist/invoice clerk (dactylo-facturière)

(ii) book-keeper/typist (aide-comptable connaissance dactylo)

(iii) typist (dactylographe)

(iv) typist/reprographic (dactylo not. réprographie)

(v) shorthand typist/correspondence (sténodactylo-correspondancière)

(vi) punch-card operator (opératrice saisie données)

Awards of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Chambres de Commerce et d'Industrie)

There are 130 Chambers of Commerce in France which offer at least one type of continuing education for Level V tertiary sector qualifications.[11] Although the Chambers of Commerce are State recognised, they are autonomous bodies operating entirely at regional and local level. The Permanent Assembly in Paris does not have details of courses run by the different

Chambers of Commerce, this information is apparently only available from the individual Chambers of Commerce themselves. The Chambers of Commerce and Industry also run a very small number of full-time technical schools offering the C.A.P. and the B.E.P. in the tertiary sector. Again, according to information supplied by the Permanent Assembly there are only 4 of these establishments at this level in the whole of France run by Chambers of Commerce.

Privately run secretarial courses. There are, of course a large number of these schools offering short courses in typing and other office skills. The opinion of employers and other experts was that these qualifications were of lower status than those set out above.

1.5 The validating bodies - relative size of training operations

The dominance of State validated awards in this field can be seen by comparing the total number of certificates awarded in the fields and at the level under consideration.

Table I shows the total number of certificates awarded by the Ministry of Education at Level V in office work and related fields compared to the total number awarded by A.F.P.A.

TABLE I

Certificates awarded in office skills 1981

Awarding bodies	
Ministry of Education	A.F.P.A.
C.A.P. & B.E.P.	(i),(ii),(iii),(vi),(v)
1981	
82,771	2,453

Source: A.F.P.A. Rapport statistique 1981
Ministry of Education SIGES Note d'information No. 82-40
8 Nov. 1982 Table 4

2. The context of the awards - requirements, duration, transferability

2.1 The status of technical awards

The 'value' of an award is the sum of its position in the hierarchy of educational awards combined with a demand factor from the labour market. In this section, the position of the awards under consideration in relation to the educational qualification hierarchy will be plotted in terms of pre-entry requirements, duration, transferability etc.

It is an acknowledged fact in France that only pupils who are too weak in academic work to continue with general education leading to the Baccalauréat continue in short vocational

education. However, entrance requirements for the C.A.P. are considerably lower (practically non-existent) than for the B.E.P. Furthermore, what may be accurate in connection with entry requirements for the C.A.P.s and B.E.P.s in the tertiary sector may not be true for certificates in other fields. Some sections will take pupils with lower qualifications than those required by C.A.P./B.E.P. others may require far higher qualifications - not so much by virtue of the intrinsic degree of difficulty involved in the courses but as a way of matching the supply of places and demands of pupils.

2.2 Entry requirements for C.A.P., B.E.P. courses

There is a recognised route to a C.A.P. rather than a precise set of entry requirements.

Pupils usually follow one of two routes to a C.A.P. After the first two years of secondary schooling in a comprehensive college - C.E.S. (collège d'enseignement secondaire), pupils who have decided or who have been advised to opt for short vocational education may, if already 14 years old, enter a 3rd year pre-vocational remedial class (C.P.P.N.) which may either be in a C.E.S. or in a separate institution responsible for all short vocational education, the L.E.P. (vocational high school/lycée d'enseignement professionnel). Or, the pupil may enter the 3rd year preparatory class of a L.E.P. After a year in the pre-vocational remedial class the C.A.P. requires 2 more years of study in the L.E.P.

Those who enter the 3rd year preparatory class in the L.E.P. are similarly required to undertake 2 more years of study.

As far as formal entrance requirements to the C.A.P. are concerned, it is clear that there are none. However, the pupil is required to reach a satisfactory standard in the pre-vocational year and in each year of the C.A.P. course.

In order to enter a course leading to a B.E.P., a pupil is normally required to complete satisfactorily four years of secondary education in the comprehensive college. He/she will then transfer to the L.E.P. and follow a two year course leading to the B.E.P. Thus selection does not take place at the point of entry to the C.A.P./B.E.P. courses, but until recently there has been considerable attrition during the courses as pupils fail to reach the standard required. The Ministry of Education data on pupils leaving school at Level Vbis in 1980 shows that in each of the first two years of the C.A.P. course approximately 13% of pupils dropped out of the educational system. A similar percentage dropped out of the first year of the two year B.E.P. course.(12)

2.3 Entry requirements for A.F.P.A. courses

Admission to A.F.P.A. courses is far from automatic. In 1981 only 51.85% of those applying for an A.F.P.A. course were admitted and of these only 30% were able to follow the course of their choice.(13) There appear to be two main reasons why those applying are not always able to enter the course of their choice. The first reason is that A.F.P.A. does

not have enough places for all those requiring them. In 1981 the waiting period for admission to 22 out of the 230 types of course offered was over 2 years - among courses with long waiting lists were the tertiary sector courses mentioned above. The other reason why applicants are not always admitted to the course of their choice is their poor level of education. The A.F.P.A. representative with whom I spoke considered that the admission requirement to A.F.P.A. courses at Level V would be similar to that required for a B.E.P. i.e. satisfactory completion of 4 years of secondary education. However, A.F.P.A. cannot expect its applicants to be homogeneous in type of educational experience and does not have any rigid criteria for entry. A number (25%) of all applicants are advised to follow preparatory courses to reach a satisfactory level. For the tertiary sector, these preparatory courses are offered by correspondence. Approximately 50% complete these preparatory courses and over 90% of participants are women.(14)

2.4 Duration of courses

C.A.P.	Normally 3 years full-time
B.E.P.	2 years full-time
A.F.P.A.	Between 1,040 hours and 1,280 hours

2.5 Transferability of awards

By transferability is meant the extent to which awards enable holders to progress to higher level qualifications (vertical transferability) or to another professional branch (lateral transferability). At this point it is necessary to distinguish

clearly between the C.A.P. award in the branches of banking and insurance and the C.A.P. in secretarial work and accountancy. The C.A.P. in banking and insurance is characterised by the fact that this qualification is taken only by individuals already employed in this sector as a starting qualification to familiarise them with its operation. The C.A.P. banking option and the C.A.P. insurance option are not taught in 3 years in a vocational high school (L.E.P.) but offered full or part-time in centres throughout the country and run by two professional associations, the Centre for Training in the Banking Profession (Centre de Formation de la Profession Bancaire) and the Association for Insurance Studies (Association pour l'Enseignement de l'Assurance). These qualifications, (C.A.P. banking and insurance) form the first rung of a ladder of internal vertical mobility within these branches. The C.A.P. banking allows the holder to study for the Professional Diploma after a certain amount of work experience (Brevet Professionnel - employé de banque). This diploma which is awarded by the Ministry of Education can lead in turn to entrance to the Technical Institute of Banking (Institut Technique de Banque). The value placed upon the B.P. by employers is high and it is interesting to note that in order to enter the Technical Institute of banking candidates must hold either a B.P. or an M.A. (Maîtrise) from a University. A similar ladder of internal mobility and promotion is available in insurance. By contrast it is possible to study for the B.E.P. in these two sectors in a limited number of vocational high schools - L.E.P. - run by the Ministry of Education. The transferability of the B.E.P. in

banking and insurance will thus be considered together with the B.E.P. in secretarial and accountancy work in the next paragraph.

The C.A.P. and the B.E.P. in secretarial work and book-keeping can be followed by a year of specialized vocational training (mentions complémentaires), and (années spéciales) which increase the value of the award and allow some lateral mobility. In exceptional cases, bright pupils will be able to join the appropriate technical options situated in the 'long' form of secondary education and obtain either a technical diploma (Brevet de technicien) or a technical baccalaureat (baccalauréat de technicien). The latter allows entry to higher education. However, this route depends upon whether a special fifth form class (seconde spéciale) is available (for holders of the C.A.P.) or a special first year sixth (première d'adaptation) for the B.E.P. However, numbers transferring are small. In 1981-2 3% of those taking the C.A.P. transferred and 8.41% of those taking the B.E.P. Many of these fail to complete the transition and drop out.(15)

A.F.P.A. awards - these do not fit into any established scheme of mobility/transferability. Once in work holders could improve their qualifications through entitlement to continuing training.(16)

3. Courses of training - where they are taught and by whom

3.1 Courses run by the Ministry of Education

In terms of validation of awards and syllabus construction it has already been stressed that the Ministry of Education is by far the most important body, both in the field of initial preparation for young people and in the provision of courses for adults. It is therefore hardly surprising to find that the C.A.P. and B.E.P. awards are taught in institutions - the L.E.P. or vocational high school - which form an integral part of the State system of secondary education and that apart from a recently introduced measure providing for short periods of observation in office or factory, there is generally little contact between the L.E.P. and the world of work for which it prepares. Approximately one third of all Level V qualifications in the tertiary sector are taught in private institutions under contract to the state. The fact that both State and private institutions are preparing their students for the same examinations which have a strictly defined syllabus means that there is no significant difference between the courses of training given in State institutions and private institutions under contract to the State.

Not all L.E.P.s offer the whole range of C.A.P. and B.E.P. courses. There are wide variations in the availability of courses even within the part of the tertiary sector considered in this study. For example, the B.E.P. insurance can only be taken in 31 L.E.P.s in the whole of France, whereas the B.E.P. (shorthand typist) can be taken in over 100 L.E.P.s in Paris and the Parisian region alone. The availability or non-availability of certain specialities in L.E.P.s within reach of a student's

home may have an important influence in the final 'choice' of course made by the student. It is openly admitted that if a student's first choice of course is not available in the local L.E.P., he/she may find him/herself drafted into a totally different course.(17)

As L.E.P.s are an integral part of the State system of secondary education, all teachers in L.E.P.s are State employees and most of them - apart from a small proportion of temporary teachers - possess the qualifications laid down by the Ministry of Education as appropriate for teachers at this level.

But the French educational system as a whole suffers from a lack of internal coherence and unity which is partly the result of the institutionalised divisions among the teachers employed by the Ministry in its different schools. Within the school system as a whole there are more than 20 different types of teacher, each having its own conditions of employment and salary. Furthermore, the prestigious long secondary education given in the lycée d'enseignement général and the lycée d'enseignement technique have the most highly paid and most highly qualified body of teachers. The relative status of short vocational education can be constructed from the fact that its teachers are less highly qualified and less well paid than those who work in long secondary education. Even within the L.E.P. there are three distinct types of teacher, distinguished not only by function but also by the number of hours taught per week and by salary. The three types are:-

1. Teacher of general subjects
   Qualifications required - 2 years higher education, one year teacher training and one year supervised teaching.
2. Teacher of theory of vocational subjects
   Qualifications - same as 1) above plus 2 years practical experience.
3. Teacher of practical subjects
   Qualifications required - same as 2) above but educational requirement lowered to level of baccalauréat if the teacher has had sufficient practical experience (minimum 5 years).

All teachers in vocational high schools who receive permanent positions (titularisés) must first pass a competitive examination for entry to a Vocational Teacher Training College (Ecole Normale Nationale d'Apprentissage). The course there lasts two years, one year (either the first or the second) is spent in teaching in a L.E.P., the other year of training is largely practical in nature since all Vocational Training Colleges have a L.E.P. attached where student teachers carry out supervised teaching activities.

3.2 Courses run by A.F.P.A.

It has already been shown that the A.F.P.A. training operation at this level is very small compared to that of the Ministry of Education. A.F.P.A. has 130 centres distributed throughout the whole of France. Each centre offers the whole range of courses including these already mentioned. Teaching staff on

A.F.P.A. courses are not required to have such a high level of general education as teachers in the L.E.P. but they are required to have had at least five years' professional experience (at A.F.P.A. headquarters it was stressed that this requirement was strictly adhered to) and to pass an examination of practical competence in their speciality. If successful in this they receive 16 weeks training in teaching methods. This stress on practical experience and competence corresponds to the practical nature of the A.F.P.A. qualification as opposed to the more general and theoretical orientation of the C.A.P. and B.E.P. qualifications.

4. Content of syllabuses - C.A.P., B.E.P. and A.F.P.A.

The technical content of syllabuses will not be discussed at this point, instead the qualifications will be compared in terms of the ratio of general to vocational content.

It has already been noted that the C.A.P. course is narrower and of a more elementary level than the B.E.P. In all the C.A.P. courses under consideration here we can distinguish 2 main groups of subjects.

1. General education - maths, French, foreign language etc. This group of subjects occupies 16/33 hours per week over the 3 year duration of the course.
2. Vocational subjects (theory and practice) 13/33 hours.

When considering the balance between general and vocational teaching on the C.A.P. course we must remember that students normally embark on the course after only 3 years of secondary education and before they have reached the school-leaving age of 16.

The B.E.P. course which can only be taken after four years of general secondary education is more heavily weighted towards vocational studies. Out of a total of 36 hours per week, on each of the 2 years of the course, 20/36 in the first year and 23/36 hours in the second year are devoted to vocational theory and practice. The rest of the time is devoted to general education.

The entire C.F.P. course is devoted to the theory and practice of the vocational area. There is no significant element of general education in A.F.P.A. courses.

NATIONAL MONOGRAPH: FRANCE

Part One

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1 Levels I and II - Higher ed. leading to a degree
Level III - Higher ed. lasting 2 years leading to diploma
Level IV - School leaving cert. enabling holder to enter higher ed.
Level V - Short vocational training and education
Level V bis - Leaving school after successful completion of 4 years secondary ed. or drop-out from Level V
Level VI - End of compulsory education.

2 Two sources of careers information have been used
a) publications of ONISEP (Office national d'information sur les enseignements et les professions)
b) CIDJ (Centre d'information et de documentation jeunesse).

3 Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur les Qualifications Note d'information No. 52 Nov. '78 'Ce que l'on sait aujourd'hui du travail dans les relations avec la formation'.

4 Ibid 'Ces nomenclatures recouvrent des réalités mouvantes qui avec le temps, varient non seulement dans leur contenu, mais aussi dans leurs interactions'.

5 CEDEFOP 'Approximation of training levels for skilled occupations in the EC' B. Sellin Berlin Nov. 1981.

6 CEREQ op.cit. p. 8 'La qualification peut être définie comme le lien entre les emplis organisés par les entreprises et les capacités données aux individus par leur experience et leur formation'.

7 The choice of definition of jobs and qualifications as elaborated by the careers services is a deliberate one designed to simplify the problems of methodology arising from a comparative study. I am aware that far more accurate and detailed descriptions of occupations and training exist in France, e.g. INSEE and the Répertoire française des emplois. However, one has only to read 'The classification of skilled workers in the EC' CEDEFOP, to realise the formidable problems of arriving at common definitions on the basis of classifications which are designed for different purposes in different member states. Careers service literature has the very important

virtue of serving the same purpose in different member states which may well prove to outweigh its disadvantages of oversimplification.

8 It should perhaps be mentioned here that various experts have pointed out to me that the banks now recruit all their personnel on the basis of their own centralised admissions examination. This examination requires a level of education close to that of school leaving/university entrance. (See below).

9 C.A.P. Certificate of Vocational Proficiency (Certificat a l'Aptitude Professionnelle). Referred to as C.A.P.

10 B.E.P. Diploma of Vocational Education (Brevet d'Etudes Professionnels). Referred to as B.E.P.

11 Information supplied by the Assemblée Permanente des Chambres de Commerce et d'Industrie. Service de la Formation et de la Promotion Sociale de l'Emploi.

12 Ministère de l'Education Nationale SEIS Document de Travail No. 268 Bilan des Sorties de l'Appareil Educatif 1978-79-80.

13 A.F.P.A Rapport Annuel 1981 p. 29.

14 Ibid.

15 Le Monde de l'Education, No. 91 Fevrier 1983 p. 15 Les Clefs de l'orientation.

16 Under the 1971 Act, all employers have an entitlement to a certain amount of training per year.

17 'This particular girl had always wanted to be a hairdresser from when she was very small but wassent off to do a C.A.P. in book-keeping on the grounds that 'she was very good in that field'. Example quoted in 'Le Monde de l'Education' Fevrier 1983 p. 15.

NATIONAL MONOGRAPH: FRANCE

Part Two

1. The employment of holders of tertiary sector awards

1.1 Levels of unemployment

The first part of this monograph proposes a static description of tertiary sector courses as they are presented to potential recruits by the course providers themselves and by the careers service. It would thus be false to assert that in drawing up such a description we are not taking account of reality - the information provided by the careers service is real and influences thousands of decisions every year. In fact the reality we are considering here is the 'link' as defined in the quotation from a CEREQ publication between the jobs organised by firms and the abilities given to individuals through training. However, once the individual enters or tries to enter the world of work for which his/her qualification is valid, the discovery is made that the 'target job' as conceived of though the course of training does not exist in its pure form. When the holders of the C.A.P. and B.E.P. qualifications test their value on the labour market they discover two things - first that only a little more than half of them will get any sort of job

- second that of those who do obtain a job only one third to one half will work in the type of job for which they have been trained. (1)

The same is true for adults who obtain a Certificate of Adult Training (C.F.P.) from A.F.P.A. Of the holders of a

Level V qualification in office work 43% were still unemployed 6 months after the end of their course. Of those who had found work, only 31% were working at the type of work for which they had been trained.[2]

1.2 Over-representation of women

Of those obtaining a secretarial qualification at C.A.P. and B.E.P. level 99% are girls - the same is true for A.F.P.A. qualifications - 93% women. In the field of accountancy/bookkeeping 69% of C.A.P. holders and 66% of B.E.P. holders are girls. Clearly, one very important factor in creating a much higher unemployment rate for girls than for boys at Level V is the concentration of girls on courses preparing for tertiary sector unemployment. Firstly, employment opportunities at office worker level have been declining steadily since 1970[3], secondly, the CEREQ study quoted above shows that holders of Level IV qualifications are occupying almost the same range of jobs as those with Level V.[4]

1.3 Strategies adopted by students in the face of unemployment

In 1980, the unemployment rate for boys leaving with a B.E.P. in accountancy/book-keeping was slightly higher than for girls with the same qualification. It seems therefore that the much higher unemployment rate for girls at Level V is a function of their concentration in tertiary sector training rather than of any direct discrimination. What strategies are girls choosing a course of training adopting to combat the difficulties encountered at this level? And how are these strategies affecting the qualifications themselves?

A first analysis seems to suggest that girls are continuing to enter the tertiary sector courses of training rather than switching to courses of industrial training. However, the trend seems to be towards entry at a higher level, that of the technical Baccalaureat G.

The progressive abandonment of the low level C.A.P. and the stagnation in numbers taking the B.E.P. in favour of a more general qualification at a higher level is, moreover, in keeping with employment trends in important areas of the tertiary sector, notably in banks and to some extent in insurance. In the case of banks, I was assured by Mlle. Robert, head of the Paris Chamber of Commerce Careers Service that banks now recruit only in the basis of their own examinations which require at least a Level IV education.(5)

1.4 Evaluation of content of training courses

The contrast between 'target jobs' and 'jobs in real time' has already been mentioned at the beginning of this section. We cannot conclude on the basis of high unemployment alone that courses of training do not equip individuals properly for the jobs for which they are trained. That is a question which can only be approached by first examining the content of various types of job in the firm or organisation itself and then comparing the results with the training offered. This is precisely the approach of a study carried out for A.F.P.A. in an ettempt to identify ways in which the course of training for a typist-correspondence clerk (dactylo-

facturière) could be modernised and brought into line with current demand.(6)

Three important conclusions emerge from this report. The first is that the 'target job' typist-correspondence clerk does not exist but that 'in real time' we have a multi-faceted function composed of book-keeping and secretarial work but in varying ratios depending on the size of the firm. In larger firms the book-keeping/accounts element tends to be the most important, in smaller firms a variety of secretarial tasks are more frequently found. In addition to a variety of tasks grouped under the two main headings 'accounts' and 'secretarial' and varying according to sector and size of firm, the report found that in most cases studied two further tasks were required in these types of jobs - the ability to read and store information using a VDU/keyboard

- the preparation of invoices for export orders.

Finally, and perhaps surprisingly in view of what has been said above on rising qualification levels, the report concludes that the work involved does not require more than a level V training.

We have already seen that the numbers in training and their level does not match well with the supply of jobs in this sector and that this trend is in turn accompanied by a change in the demand for courses of training. This is the first dynamic aspect of the training/labour market

relationship. Secondly, it is suggested that 'target jobs' and their associated training do not always correspond well to 'real jobs' and that job content will be in part a function of size of firm. As at A.F.P.A. and in the L.E.P. [7] course content is continually being modified to keep pace with innovations in work practice. This sort of updating is another aspect of the dynamic character of courses of training considered in relation to jobs.

2. The impact of new office technology on courses of training

2.1 Impact on the nature of office work

It could be argued that the piecemeal updating of courses and the trend towards higher level qualifications in this sector are merely a foretaste of the total transformation of the sector and associated courses of training which will be brought about when the new office and information technologies completely revolutionise tertiary sector employment. In one of two French studies on this subject considered in connection with this report [8] Acker et.al. point out that the increased use of a variety of small systems within one firms means that most staff are to some extent seeing their work change with the technical/technological content increased. What is likely but not certain is that the reorganisation of work within the tertiary sector as a result of the introduction of new technologies could result in traditional secretarial/office type work acquiring a more varied and higher level content, with new managerial type responsibilities replacing more traditional tasks. This is the view of Mandon and Rannou who identify the need in some

organisation for greater polyvalence in tertiary sector employees.[9] They identify new training needs as twofold - the need for specialised technical abilities for the handling and processing of data and the need for new attitudes and personal qualities in staff - greater flexibility in handling new situations and in taking managerial-type decisions.

2.2 Impact on curriculum planning, possible areas of change

It has been mentioned above that changes are being made in the content of C.A.P., B.E.P. and A.F.P.A. qualifications to include new technical skills such as the handling of word-processing systems.[10] At present, however, there is little evidence to show that Level V qualifications are being rethought to enable students to develop capacities for self-directed work and independent initiative. Mandon suggests, and my own evidence supports this that it is in the industrial and financial tertiary sector rather than the civil service that new technology is affecting jobs and where consequently new skills are required from personnel. Mandon also suggests that the response to these needs by firms is to recruit staff at a higher and therefore less specialised level - although she points out that we should not necessarily interpret this demand as a demand for general as opposed to vocational education - it may just be a new sort of vocational education. My own findings support these conclusions on recruitment trends. The assistant personnel manager in a large nationalised industry (Rhône-Poulenc) stated that the qualification that she preferred for secretarial staff was the Technical Baccalaureat G[11] and

that she normally would not consider C.A.P. or even B.E.P. qualifications. The demand for a higher level qualification in this case comes from a firm where job content itself has been upgraded - the typing pool has long-since been abandoned - and where word-processing and on-line filing systems are used by most staff.

2.3 The issues of polyvalence and deskilling

This demand for new attitudes and personal qualities in certain areas of tertiary sector employment - already reflected in changing demand for qualifications - is yet another dimension of the changing relationship between qualifications and labour-market requirements. It would be useful to know whether the trend in student choice towards Level IV rather than Level V qualifications is to some extent motivated by awareness of changing labour market demands.

At present it is only possible to construct a series of scenarios setting out alternative ways in which new technology may modify office work and consequently training. Two of the most important of these scenarios are, on the one hand the hypothesis of increased polyvalence and on the other that of deskilling. A trade-unionist at the head of a union which represents, among other sectors, employees in banking and insurance, considered that in banking new technology has resulted in the deskilling of many jobs and had reduced personnel requirements by 15-20%. The point to note here is that the deskilling process has not been acccompanied by a demand for new recruits with lower-level qualifications. As has been pointed out elsewhere and

as was confirmed in this interview, recruitment to banking and insurance is highly competitive and requires a level superior to that of Level V. We cannot therefore assume that deskilling, if it does occur, will be accompanied by renewed demand for lower level qualifications.

NATIONAL MONOGRAPH: FRANCE

Part Two

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1 ONISEP Bulletin d'information 339 Dec. 1981 CEREQ L'insertion des jeunes nouvellement formés' Tableaux 1 et 4.5.

2 Grisez Jean L'insertion professionnelle des stagiaires A.F.P.A.

3 CEREQ Les emplois tertiaires des entreprises industrielles Dossier No. 29 Octobre 1981. It should be noted that this study deals only with industrial tertiary sector jobs.

4 ONISEP op.cit. Tableaux 6, 7.

5 Although the Centre Trudaine (secretarial school run by the Paris Chamber of Commerce) is not representative of Level IV qualifications, it is interesting to note that students who leave the Centre with the Bac. G and the Certificate of the C.C.I.P. have no difficulty in finding a job. Indeed, according to the school's deputy-director, Mlle. Duhamel, the school is unable to satisfy the demand by firms for its students.

6 AFPA/DTPR NEUILLY DTPR VENISSIEUX Etude d'opportunité concernant la modernisation de la formation 'dactylo-facturière' August 1982.

7 Much is written about old-fashioned equipment and practices in the L.E.P. However, in the L.E.P. d'application at Antony, students on the B.E.P. aide-comptable course were working on microcomputers - while the student teachers were only a few lessons ahead! I was told that all L.E.P.s are getting this equipment, the main bottleneck being the retraining of teaching staff.

8 Acker F.et.al. Application de l'informatique au secteur tertiaire: impact sur les qualifications, et besoins en formation CEREQ May 1982.

9 Mandon N. Rannou J. Technologie et Travail: L'Informatisation des activités de bureau Octobre 1982 CEREQ.

10 In discussion with Mlle. Roumengou, secretary to the 16ème Commission Consultative, I was told that C.A.P. and B.E.P. syllabuses had just been updated to include word-processing.

11 This qualification is studied in the framework of 'long' secondary education. It required 3 years full-time education after 4 years of general secondary education.

NATIONAL MONOGRAPH: GERMANY

Part One

1. Qualifications available to school leavers in the field of office work, banking and insurance below the level of University entrance qualifications

1.1 The definition of level of qualification to be studied

This study is designed to consider only those qualifications which prepare initial entrants to achieve a qualification which is below that required for entry to higher education. In the case of Germany, entrance to institutions of higher education is conditional upon holding the Abitur (in the case of universities and technical universities) and the Fachhochschulreife in the case of Fachhochschulen.(1) This study concentrates upon initial vocational preparation available to 15 and 16 years old school leavers and which culminates in the award of the Berufsabschluss (Certificate of Completion of Vocational Training). This qualification confers certain rights within the labour market but cannot lead to higher education without further study in the secondary education sector (see section 8.2 below). However, the question of level of qualifcation is more complex in Germany than in the other member states studied, since there is a clearly established trend for school leavers to enter upon a course of training leading to the Certificate of Completion of Vocational Training (Berufsabschluss) after they have obtained the Abitur. This trend is discussed in relation to the tertiary sector in

section 4.2 below and some of its implications are considered in Part 2 of this monograph.

1.2 The identification of occupations within the tertiary sector for which the Berufsabschluss is the recognised preparation

As for the monographs on France and the U.K. the relevant occupational areas will be identified from the definitions offered to school leavers by careers literature. In Germany this approach is facilitated further by the fact that a young person under 18 years of age may train only for a legally recognised occupation. The range of occupations for which young people may train are defined in the Berufsbildungsgesetz (Occupational Training Act) and further regulated by the Berufsbildungsförderungsgesetz (Vocational Training Promotion Act).[2] The recognized qualifications in the area of this study are therefore designated in the Occupational Training Act and described in the official publication for school leavers of the Bundesanstalt für Arbeit (Federal Labour Institute). The occupations for which the qualifications described below are required are thus taken from the list of recognized occupations for which courses of training are available as described in Berufaktuell für Schulabgänger 1984 (Careers Information for school leavers 1984) published by the Federal Labour Institute, supplemented where necessary by the Blätter zur Berufskunde (Careers leaflets) published by the same body.

1.3 Occupations and recognized courses of training to be described in this study

Bürogehilfe /Bürogehilfin (Office Boy/Girl)

Bürokaufmann/-kauffrau (Office Clerk)

Industriekaufmann/-kauffrau (Industrial Clerk)
Kaufmann im Gross und Aussenhandel (Clerk in Wholesale and Foreign Trade)
Bankkaufmann/Bankkauffrau (Bank Clerk)
Versicherungskaufmann/Versicherungskauffrau (Insurance Clerk)

1.4 The occupations for which these recognized courses of training prepare

Bürogehilfin (Office Girl/Boy).
The Office Girl/Boy is employed in industry, commerce and administration usually on routine tasks. She/he prepares incoming and outgoing correspondence for further dispatch or for the post, takes charge of petty cash and office material, prepares statistics and carries out simple book-keeping procedures. She/he needs shorthand, typing and good spelling. After the initial training period, it is usual to specialise later as a shorthand or audio typist.

Bürokaufmann/-kauffrau (Office Clerk).
The office clerk is concerned with organisation and administration within the firm. He/she deals with the keeping of accounts, with the calculation of wages and bonuses, with the administration of buildings and estate. He/she does not deal with products, but with correspondence, accounts, tax and insurance questions.

Industriekaufmann/-kauffrau (Industrial Clerk).
The industrial clerk deals with all the administrative procedures associated with industrial production, with arrangements for ordering stocks and for storing them, with publicity, marketing

and dispatch. The industrial clerk must be familiar with book-keeping procedures, invoicing and dispatch. According to the area in which the industrial clerk works, he/she deals with clients, banks, marketing personnel, sales representatives, local and central government, and with wholesalers and retailers. In large firms, it is usual to specialise in one area, but in small firms the industrial clerk may be responsible for a variety of tasks.

Kaufmann im Gross und Aussenhandel (Clerk in Wholesale and Foreign Trade).
Wholesalers buy goods from the producer and sell them to retailers, large-scale users and producers in the finishing trade. The clerk in wholesale trade is therefore in touch with both producers and retailers and deals with wholesale buying, with warehousing arrangements and with sales and dispatch. In the office, he/she may frequently deal with foreign-language correspondence and if dealing directly with sales may travel to open up new markets.

Bankkaufmann/Bankkauffrau (Bank Clerk).
The bank clerk may find him/herself dealing with the following tasks - advising clients, the granting of credit facilities, the operation of clearing facilities, calculation of interest, collection of cheques and other instruments, opening and administration of accounts, cashier work. The bank clerk may initially work at the counter or as cashier and later specialise in a certain area.

Versicherungskaufmann/frau (Insurance Clerk).
The most important tasks of the insurance clerk are the administration of insurance policies, inspection work outside the office and the

winning of new clients. This involves general clerical work and in particular tasks such as work on the drawing up of proposals, on the changing of policies etc. Insurance clerks must be familiar with the relevant knowledge and have a basic competence in the use of data processing equipment since insurance is one of the fields of employment where computers are most intensively used.

2. The legal framework governing the award of qualifications

2.1 The Occupational Training Act

The Occupational Training Act (Berufsbildungsgesetz) provides that young people under the age of 18 shall be trained exclusively in a recognized occupation. Therefore, for a young person under the age of 18, the six occupations identified above are accessible only if the state recognized Certificate of Completion of Vocational Training (Berufsabschluss) is obtained in the relevant field. The opinion of all the experts was that it was extremely rare for a mature adult to be taken on in one of these occupations with a view to training for the Berufsabschluss and it appears that this route is almost exclusively available to young people. Both at the Ministry of Education and Science and at the German Trade Union Federation, it was mentioned that a very small number of courses are offered in certain Länder (regions) which are taught entirely in the Vocational College and which confer the equivalent of the Berufsabschluss. However, the Ministry had no separate statistics on these courses and it seems reasonable to conclude that they are not yet developed sufficiently to merit attention here. For nearly all school leavers, the route to these occupations lies through a course of training with an employer.

The nature of this qualification can best be understood through a brief description of the legal framework which regulated the various stages and types of experience leading to the award. The first step towards obtaining the Berufsabschluss in any occupational field must be taken by the young person. He/she must find an employer in the field in which he/she wishes to be trained who is willing to conclude a Training Contract with the young person (Berufsausbildungsvertrag). The training contract must be a written agreement signed by all partners and must stipulate the following:-

1. Occupation for which trainee is being trained and how the stipulated training is to be given.
2. Duration of training.
3. Training to be given outside the work place.
4. Duration of probationary period.
5. Duration of daily training period.
6. Amount of trainee allowance to be paid.
7. Holiday entitlement.
8. Conditions under which the training agreement can be terminated by either side.

The agreement or contract must be registered by the employer with the local Chamber of Trade or Commerce.

Once the young person has concluded the Training Contract, he/she works within a complex system of provision of training known as the dual system. The title dual system refers to the dual nature of providers of training and of place of provision.

Provider of training	Employer	Land Ministry of Education
Place of provision of training	Work place	Vocational School

Fig. 1 The provision of training within the dual system.

The young person under 18 is bound by the Occupational Training Act to attend the relevant courses provided at the Vocational School and the employer is equally bound to release the young person and to pay him/her during the time spent at college. The training provision matrix can be situated within the legal framework in this way:-

		Decisions of Conference of Education Ministers
Occ. Training Act		
Employer	Land Ministries of Education	
Work place	Vocational school	
Occupational Training Act		

Fig. 2 The legal framework regulating the dual provision of training.

It can be noted from Figure 2 that the Land Ministries of Education are not included within the terms of the Occupational Training

Act but are free to organise the Vocational Schools according to the framework curriculum (Rahmenlehrplan) agreed for each course of training by the Ministers of Education for the different Länder meeting together (Kultusministerkonferenz).

2.2 Qualifications - legal provision governing the content of training

Just as the Occupational Training Act provides a framework regulating the conditions of training throughout the Federal Republic of Germany, the Occupational Training Regulations (Verordnung über die Berufsbildung) lay down a framework curriculum for each occupation within which individual firms draw up the curriculum to be followed by trainees in the work place. Legal recognition of the regulations for a particular occupation requires the formal agreement of the appropriate Minister (in the case of tertiary sector qualifications, the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs (Wirtschaftsminister) acting with the agreement of the Federal Minister of Education and Science. The agreement of these two Ministries results in the publication of a set of Occupational Training Regulations and the legal status of a particular course of training is thus established. However, the formal publication of a set of Training Regulations is preceded by extensive consultation which may involve any of the following bodies:-

Professional associations and leading employer organisations
Responsible bodies (i.e. Chambers of Trade and Industry etc.).
Trade unions.
Leading representatives of the Chambers of Industry and Crafts.
Committee of Regional authorities for Occupational Training.
The appropriate Federal Ministries.

As a rule, no set of training regulations will be revised or issued which have not previously been agreed by leaders of employer organizations and of trade union organizations.

2.3 Validation of qualifications

The Occupational Training Act lays down the composition of the Board of Examiners for any given occupational qualification. The Board consists of at least 3 members, these members must consist of one each of the following groups:-

a) employer representatives

b) trade union representatives

c) teachers from the Vocational School.

At least two thirds of the Board must consist of employer and trade union representatives. Boards are constituted locally in each of the recognized bodies which are either Chambers of Crafts (Handwerkskammer) or Chambers of Industry and Commerce (Industrie-und Handelskammer) depending on the type of occupation to be examined. The 1983 edition of Ausbildung und Beruf lists 43 Chambers of Crafts 32 Chambers of Industry and Commerce which are recognized bodies for the purpose of examining and validating courses of training leading to the Berufsabschluss. It should therefore be stressed that the examining of candidates for the qualifications under consideration here is very much the responsibility of locally constituted bodies and that the nature of examinations in a given field will vary from one locality to another depending on the way in which the guidelines issued at national level for syllabuses and examination have been interpreted locally to take account of local needs and conditions.

2.4 The prescriptive function of the Occupational Training Regulations

The Occupational Training Regulations issued at Federal Level in the way outlined above have a prescriptive function.

The regulations prescribe:-

The occupational area to which the training leads.
The length of the training period.
The skills and knowledge to be acquired during the training period.
Guidelines for the content and timetable of training.
Examination requirements and any other assessment procedures.

Therefore the six occupations/courses of training described in this study are all regulated in this way.

3. The supply of training places for trainees in the fields of office work, banking and insurance

3.1 The role of employers

Training within the dual system is the only route to a recognized vocational qualification in the fields under consideration at a level below that of the Abitur or its equivalent. The numbers of young people obtaining qualifications in the areas of office work, banking and insurance will therefore be dependent on the numbers of training places made available by employers each year. Although attempts have been made to compel employers to provide sufficient training places to meet demand, the situation at present is that there is no legal requirement for employers to provide training places. However, the Report on Occupational Training 1983 (Berufsbildungsbericht 1983) issued by the

Federal Ministry of Education and Science commends employers for increasing the supply of training places in 1982 by 4.2% over those offered in 1981, despite a difficult economic situation. Nevertheless, overall supply of training places in 1982 fell 16,000 short of the demand by young people. Of the 35,911 young people reported as not having found a training place, 6,223 were in the field of Organization, Administration and Office work.(3) These points must be borne in mind when considering access to these qualifications, since there is clearly some degree of selection when the employer makes the decision as to whether or not to conclude a training agreement.

3.2 The demand for training places in office work, banking and insurance

Five out of the six courses of training considered here are consistently reported as being among the courses most often chosen by young people. Table 1 below is taken from Basic and Structural Data 1982/3 published by the Federal Ministry of Education and Science.

Table 1

Apprentices in the 25 most acquired occupations according to Order, Training Field and Sex

Recognised Occupation	Apprentices			
	1981	1977	1981	1977
	Rank		Percentage of	
	Male Apprentices		all Female Apprentices	
Clerk in Wholesale and Foreign Trade	8	6	2.7	3.0
Bank Clerk	12	15	2.1	1.9
Industrial Clerk	14	9	2.1	2.5

Recognised Occupation	Apprentices			
	1981	1977	1981	1977
	Rank Female Apprentices		Percentage of all Female Apprentices	
Office Clerk	4	3	6.2	6.4
Industrial Clerk	6	6	5.5	5.8
Bank Clerk	9	9	4.1	3.7
Clerk in Wholesale and Foreign Trade	10	10	3.2	3.3
Office Girl	11	11	2.8	2.8

Looking at the second part of Table 1 showing female apprentices, 5 out of 6 occupations are far more strongly represented than for boys. The 1983 Occupational Training Report gives prominence to the fact that training places in the Federal Republic are not equally available to girls. Only about 25% of all trainee places are open to both boys and girls, 50% of places are only intended for boys, 25% only intended for girls. Thus, the report points out, training opportunities for girls are doubly restricted - both quantitatively and qualitatively (in that they are virtually restricted to the tertiary sector). This means that any change in tertiary sector training opportunities will have a very marked effect on opportunities for girls. The changes that can be noted

are not encouraging - firstly as can be seen from Table 2 below, there is a fall or near stagnation in 4 out of the 5 occupations for which data is available with a rise only in the least skilled occupation, that of office girl, secondly, as is discussed below, entry requirements are rising, making it harder to obtain a shrinking number of places.

Table 2

Numbers entering upon training agreements in the six occupations

Training Place	Nos. entering 1982	Variation 81-2 in %
Industrial Clerk	21,620	+ 0.6
Office Clerk	23,726	- 0.4
Bank Clerk	20,391	- 0.2
Office Girl	9,855	+ 7.4
Clerk in Wholesale and Foreign Trade	16,823	- 5.8
Insurance Clerk	Not available	Not available

Taken from Berufsbildungsbericht 1983 Table 1/4

4. Access to training places

4.1 Factors of supply and demand

It has already been noted that access to qualifications is through access to training places and that the demand for places exceeds supply. The supply of training places depends on the number made available by German employers. The Report on Occupational Training 1983 recognizes, however, that employers do not attempt to respond positively to the

training needs of young people, having provided overall 4.2% more training places in 1982 that in 1981 despite difficult economic circumstances.

As they control the supply of training places, selection for places is also largely in the hands of the employers. The Occupational Training Law does not stipulate any formal level of educational attainment as the precondition for beginning a course of training. In practice the combination of these three factors - employer control over access, no formal entry requirements and an excess of demand over supply - means that for sought after places in the tertiary sector, the entry requirements have been rising rapidly and a substantial minority now enter with the Abitur (i.e. entitlement to enter higher education) a fact which considerably confuses the category of qualifications originally selected for this study which was supposed to be a category not leading to higher education.

4.2 Average qualification levels on entry

What must be established here, for the purposes of this study, are what, in practice are the average levels of formal educational attainment required for entry to the six training courses. A reliable indication of these levels can be found in a study published by the BiBB[4] from which the following data are taken.

Table 3

Trainee places ranked according to level of qualification demanded

1980 Rank		1980% of leavers with Intermediate School Cert.[5]	1976% with Intermediate School Cert.
1	Bank Clerk	96.7	92.4
3	Insurance Clerk	94.6	85.0
10	Industrial Clerk	86.4	76.6
24	Office Girl	64.8	58.5

No data available for Office Clerk and Clerk in Wholesale and Foreign Trade.

Table 4

% of trainees with Abitur or equivalent 1980

Bank Clerk	32.1%
Insurance Clerk	19.4%
Industrial Clerk	11.8%
Office Clerk and Office Girl	below 5%

No data available for Clerk in Wholesale and Foreign Trade.

From Table 3 we can see a trend that is becoming virtually universal (except for Office Girl training) for trainees in tertiary sector employment to possess the leaving certificate of the six year Realschule (Intermediate School). Table 3 confirms the point made in 4.1 that young people holding the Abitur are now beginning to enter into training in the tertiary sector. Since at present only 41% of 15 year old school leavers

obtain the Intermediate School Certificate, entry to tertiary sector occupations via training agreement is clearly not open to the majority of the population. The implications of these trends for the status of tertiary sector qualifications will be discussed in Part 2 of this monograph which deals with the changing context of qualifications.

5. Duration of courses of training

5.1 Duration of training agreements

The duration of training agreements and therefore of courses of training is established by the Federal Regulations for each occupation. Duration cannot here be understood as weeks or years of formal instruction but as the duration of the training agreements. It should be stressed that the regulations define training in terms of a body of knowledge and skills to be acquired during a specified length of time and taught both in the work place and in the Vocational School. It is therefore not possible to quantify these courses of training in terms of total hours of instruction. It is only possible to state the duration in years of training agreements and to give an outline of the timetable established by the Vocational School in one of the Länder.

Duration of training agreements

Office Boy/Girl	2 years
Office Clerk	3 years
Industrial Clerk	3 years
Clerk in Wholesale and Foreign Trade	3 years

Bank Clerk	3 years
Insurance Clerk	3 years

5.2 Entitlement to reduction in the period of training on the basis of full-time attendance in vocational education

The Occupational Training Act stipulates that attendance at Vocational School on a full-time basis entitles the young person to a shortened period of training in the dual system once the young person has secured a training agreement. In the area of tertiary sector occupations the young person may either follow the Basic Vocational Year (Berufsgrundbildungsjahr) with the appropriate vocational specialisation or may follow a 2 year course in a Specialized Vocational School (Berufsfachschule). The successful completion of the Basic Vocational Year entitles the young person to have the period of training within the dual system shortened by one year. The successful completion of the two year full-time course at a Specialized Vocational School and the obtaining of a qualification equivalent to the Intermediate School Certificate entitles the young person to have the period of training in the dual system shortened by one year and exceptionally by one and a half years if the Vocational School course has been highly vocationally specialized. However, it should be stressed that these full-time school courses are not a substitute for a training agreement nor do they constitute an alternative route to a qualification.

5.3 Duration of Vocational School element of dual system training The existence of regional variation

Whereas content and duration of the elements of training which are the responsibility of firms are regulated by Federal Law, what is taught in the Vocational School and the number of hours of teaching to be given lies within the authority of the Land Ministry of Education. In Das berufliche Bildungswesen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland Münch states that:-

> 'Despite the efforts of the Standing Conference of Regional Ministers of Education to achieve some standardisation of educational provision, including the Vocational School, there exist differences from one Land to another in the way the Vocational School is organized - the number of hours of weekly tuition, subjects taught and in the curriculum itself'[6].

As the Vocational School programmes of each of the 11 Länder cannot be considered here, we shall take as representative the relevant Vocational School courses of one Land, North Rhine Westfalia, the second largest Land after Bavaria in terms of school population.

5.4 Duration of Vocational School component of relevant tertiary sector training courses in North Rhine Westfalia

The duration of the Vocational School component of each of the occupations under consideration is laid down in the guidelines issued by the Land Ministry of Education in accordance with the Framework Curriculum issued by the Conference of Land Ministers

of Education.

Table 5

Duration of Vocational School Courses in North Rhine Westfalia

Course of training	Hours per week in Vocational School	Days per week in Vocational School
Office Boy/Girl	12	2
Office Clerk	12 in Year 1	
	11 in Years 2 and 3	2
Industrial Clerk	12	2
Clerk in Wholesale and Foreign Trade	12	2
Bank Clerk	12	2
Insurance Clerk	12	2

The school years lasts 40 weeks so that the total amount of Vocational School tuition is as follows:-

Office Girl/Boy	480 hours x 2 = 960 hours
Office Clerk	480 + (440x2) = 1360 hours
Clerk in Wholesale and Foreign Trade	480 hours x 3 = 1440 hours
Bank Clerk	480 hours x 3 = 1440 hours
Insurance Clerk	480 hours x 3 = 1440 hours.

Alternatively, instruction may also be given in block day release form but the number of hours of instruction remains the same.

6. Where the courses are taught

6.1 The dual system

It has already been pointed out that because training takes place within the dual system, each trainee receives training simultaneously within the firm and within the educational system. This provision will now be illustrated in more detail by the adaptation of an illustrative diagram from Münch (op.cit. p. 48).

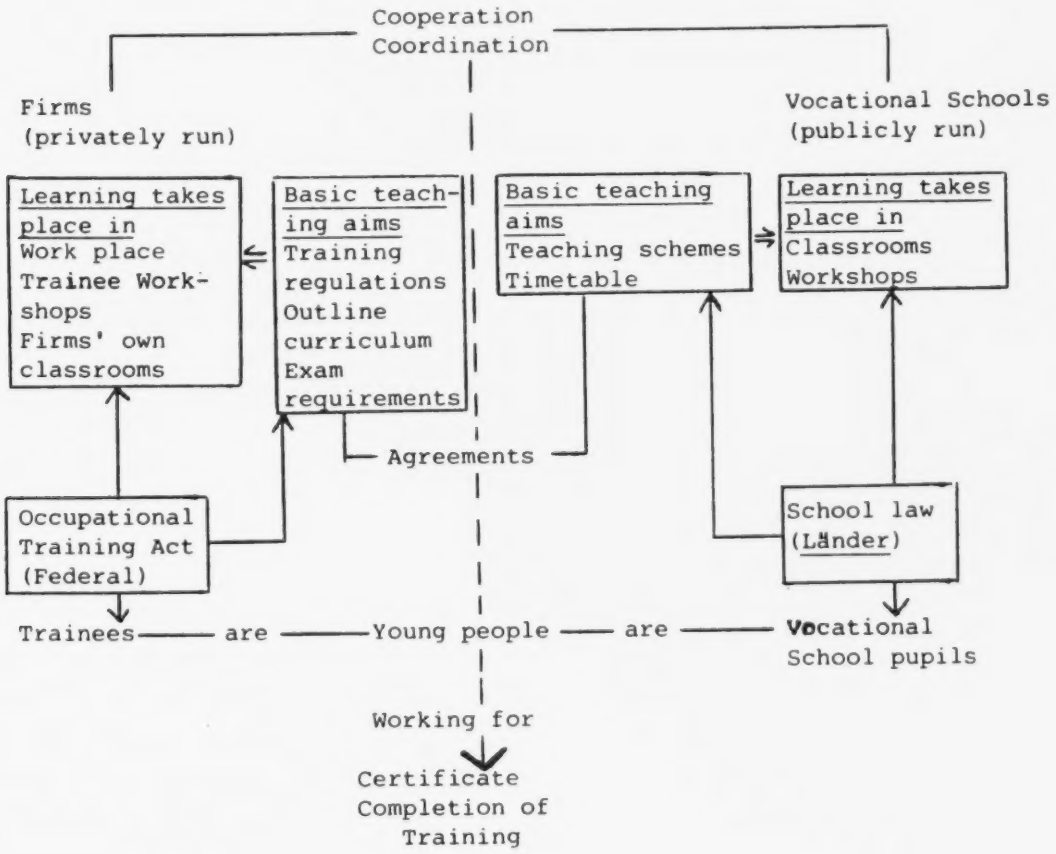


Fig. 3 The pedagogic structure of the dual system.

6.2 Training within the firm

The Occupational Training Act only allows firms to take on trainees when the firms' training facilities are of a satisfactory standard, and the local bodies (Chambers of Trade and Industry etc.) are responsible for ensuring that these standards are maintained. Naturally, facilities vary widely according to whether the firm is a very large one with a staff and specially equipped buildings for commercial training or whether the firm is a small one and may in fact have to send trainees to another centre to obtain part of their on the job tuition.

6.3 Training within the Vocational School

In some ways, the term 'school' in English is a misleading one in this context since it conveys the idea of an entirely separate and isolated institution. The German Vocational School, whose pupils attend on a part-time basis while following a course of training within the dual system, is very often part of a larger institution, in the case of tertiary sector occupations, part of a College of Commerce. In this case, the Vocational School is, in fact, one of a number of courses of study offered from a range which extend up to the equivalent of the Abitur. Trainees attending the Vocational School on a part-time basis should therefore not be perceived as being segregated into institutions cut off from other courses and levels of education and training. The relevance of this point will become apparent when we consider the qualifications of staff teaching in the Vocational School and possibilities of transfer to other courses once a qualification has already been obtained within the dual system.

7. Qualifications of personnel teaching in the dual system

7.1 Qualifications of instructors teaching in firms

The Occupational Training Act stipulates that an instructor on the firm's premises must be 'personally and technically qualified'[7]. This includes the instructor's ability to demonstrate knowledge in the occupation in question and in training methodology. If the employer himself does not possess the qualifications to train, he must employ a suitably qualified instructor.

7.2 Qualifications of staff teaching in Vocational Schools

As was mentioned in 6.3 above, Vocational Schools will very often form part of a College of Commerce offering a variety of courses at different levels and the staff of the college will rarely be restricted to one particular course but will teach on a variety of courses throughout the college. In this section, the different grades of teaching staff working within the further education and training sector will be considered.

Grades of teaching staff in Vocational Education

a) Teachers with University degrees and appropriate training who have the status of civil servant and whose pay and conditions of service are the same as those of a Gymnasium (grammar school) teacher.

b) Vocational subject teachers who have professional qualifications and experience and a State validated qualification to give practical instruction in their area of professional competence. These teachers may also have civil servant status.

c) Specialist teachers working professionally in various

commercial fields who come in to give various types of professional training for a few hours a week.

8. Transferability of qualifications

8.1 General educational routes

The completion of the Certificate of Occupational Training can serve as a starting point for upward mobility either through the general (academic) educational system or through the system of professional qualifications. Figure 4 (below) illustrates the routes available through the educational system.

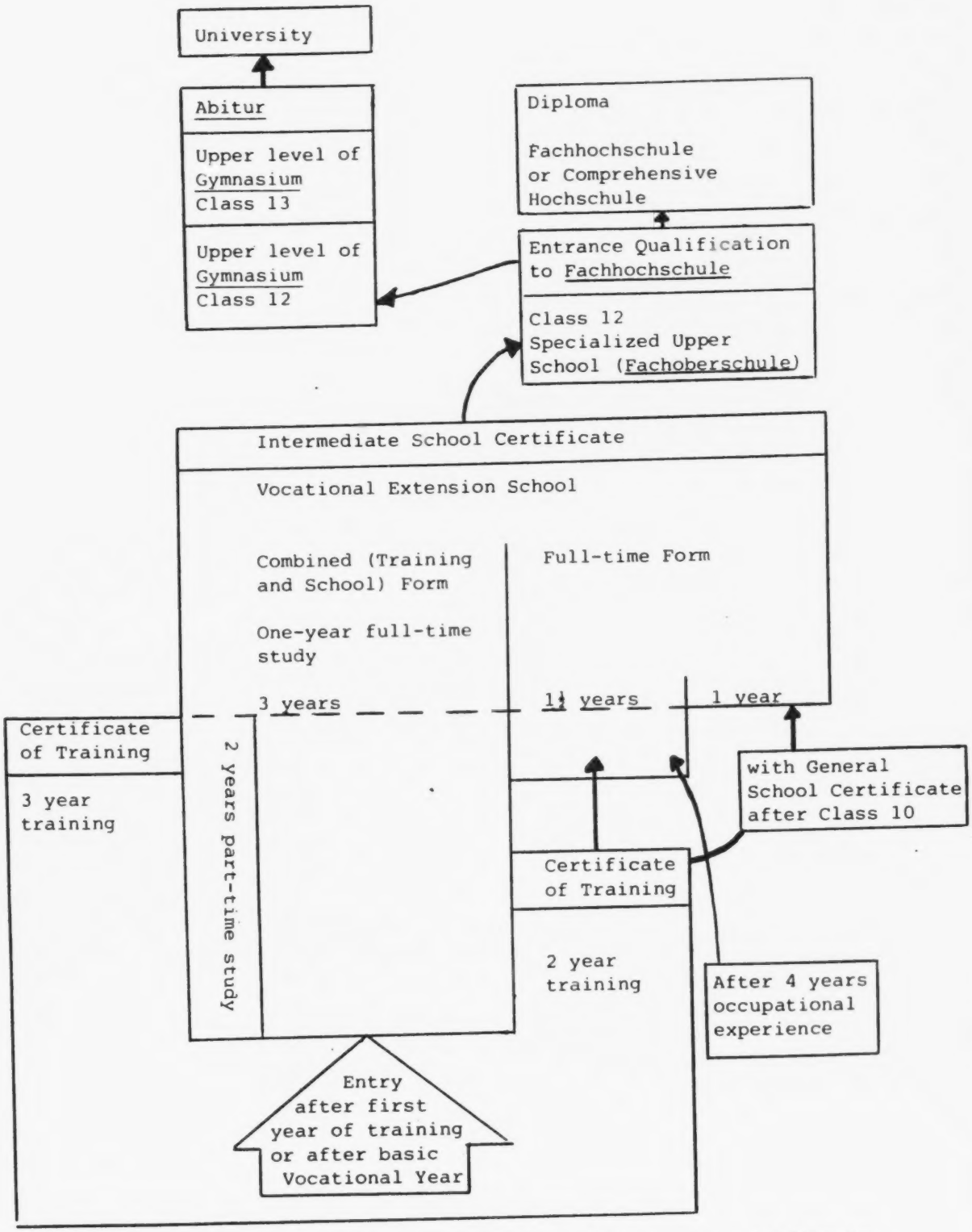
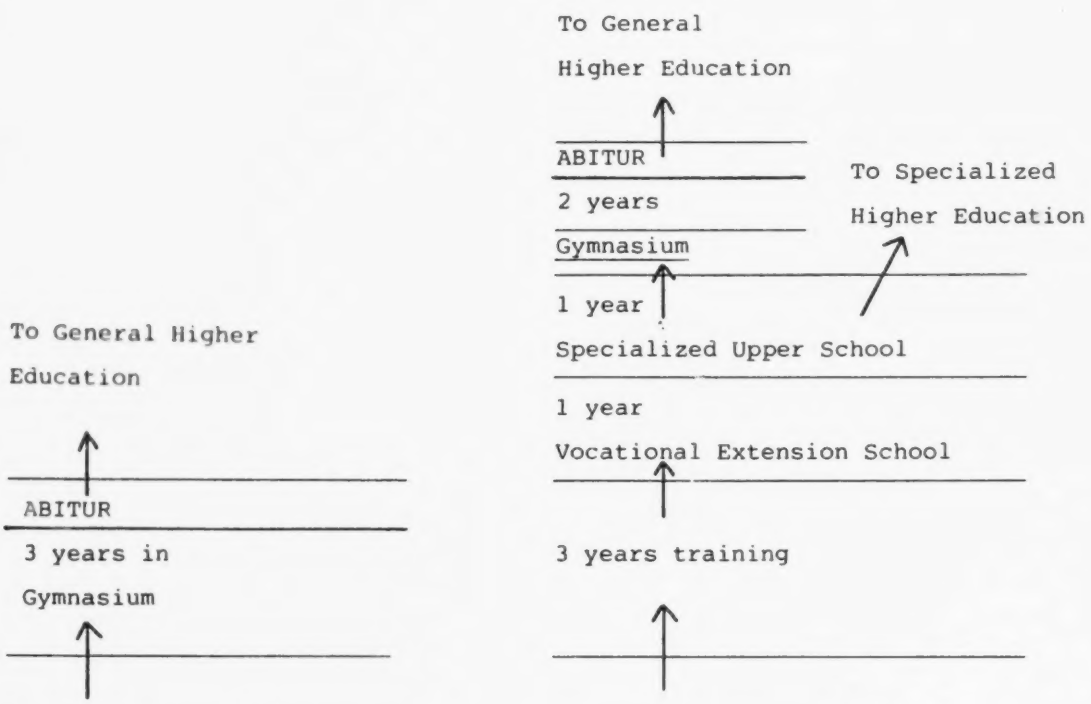


Fig. 4 Opportunities for following general academic courses leading to Fachhochscule or University after following a course of training leading to a Certificate of Training (Berufsabschluss).

Thus it can be seen from the diagram of educational opportunities in NRW that there are no formal barriers to those individuals wishing to pursue general education after completion of Occupational Training. What we should note, however, is the greater amount of time required to pursue this route compared to the direct route through the Gymnasium. (See Fig.5 below).

Fig.5 Comparison of routes to General Higher Education


To General Higher Education
ABITUR
3 years in Gymnasium
Starting point: 10 years in Gymnasium and Volksschule
To General Higher Education
ABITUR
2 years Gymnasium
To Specialized Higher Education
1 year Specialized Upper School
1 year Vocational Extension School
3 years training
10 years in General School and Volksschule

8.3 Professional routes to higher level qualifications

Commerce and administration

In the field of commercial training, the following higher qualifications can be obtained on the basis of successfully completed Occupational Training:-

Fachschulkaufman (Commercial clerk)

Fachwirt (Commercial administrator)

Wirtschaftsassistent (Business management assistant)

Training for these qualifications is usually full-time and is given either in the Fachschule (Specialized Vocational School) (see Fig.4 above) or in the case of large firms, training is planned and carried out by the firm itself. Individuals who obtain these qualifications can be expected to be promoted to middle management level.

Banking

In banking, the larger banks organize their own courses and continuing education facilities. Smaller banks have joined together to create the Vereinigung für Bankberufsbildung (Association for Professional Banking Education) which organises regular programmes of seminars. The savings bank sector (Sparkassensektor) is highly organized for continuing education, having eleven regional training centres. The final stage of study offered by the savings bank sector is considered within the sector to be equivalent to tertiary level study.

Insurance

Two formal courses leading to higher qualifications (Versicherungsfachwirt) are available to those individuals who have successfully part-time in evening classes or by correspondence. In addition, the Fachhochschule in Cologne offers a full-time

specialized higher education qualification in insurance studies to suitably qualified candidates.

9. Content of syllabuses

A detailed comparison of syllabuses and analysis of points of similarity and difference will be undertaken in the final comparative section of this report. At this point, as in the French monograph, a brief analysis will be made of the ratio of general to professional studies.

The instruction given on the firm's premises as outlined in the Occupational Training Regulations does not contain any general educational subjects. Discounting religious studies (which cannot be taught in French schools) and sport, the amount of general education given in the Vocational School amounts to a total of 2 hours per week with 8 hours per week being devoted to professional/vocational subjects*.

*This analysis is based on only one Land, North Rhine Westfalia.

NATIONAL MONOGRAPH: GERMANY

Part One

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1 Abitur - examination taken at the age of 19 and giving access to universities.

Fachhochschule - an institute of higher education offering specialized, vocational qualifications.

Fachhochschulreife - qualification giving access to the Fachhochschule.

2 Together these two Acts regulate all aspects of initial training, including procedures for the agreement of training programmes. Only the tuition given as part of training in the Berufschule (Vocational School) is not regulated by this Act but lies within the competence of the individual Länder (regions).

3 The difference between the two figures arises from places offered not always being filled because they are in the wrong area or the wrong place.

4 Althoff, Jungnickl, Selle, Werner
Schulische Vorbildung, Prüfungserfolg von Auszubildenden
Ausbildereignung 1980 Heft 34.

5 Intermediate School Certificate. This is awarded for reaching a given level of educational attainment at the end of the 10 year Intermediate School Course. It is normally considered to be equivalent to 5 'O' level passes in the English school system.

6 Münch J. Das berufliche Bildungswesen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland CEDEFOP Berlin 1982 p.60 (my translation).

7 This means possession of a 'master craftsman' or equivalent qualification plus a test of ability to teach and communicate the relevant skills. However, firms which were training before the Occupational Training Act was passed may employ instructors who have only obtained the master craftsman qualification.

NATIONAL MONOGRAPH: GERMANY

Part Two

1. The Qualifications in the Labour Market

This monograph has the same structure as the report on France. In Part 1 we have a review of the qualifications as they are presented to the consumer by the bodies responsible for curriculum and validation, together with their 'official' correspondences to the labour market. In the second part an attempt is made to assess the value of these qualifications on the labour market and to identify some of the most important trends in the evolution of the market for these qualifications. This assessment is based on two sources, firstly published statistical material and empirical studies, secondly on interviews with trade union representatives and managers closely involved with training.

1.1 Employment prospects for young people with tertiary sector qualifications

Any conclusions as to the employability of young people holding the qualifications under consideration must be qualified since the supply of training places and thus of qualifications is controlled by employers and depends to some extent on their perception of future manpower requirements. We shall therefore first consider trends in the supply of places before proceeding to consider young peoples' success in obtaining employment.

1.2 Trends in the supply of training places leading to qualifications in tertiary sector employment

The Report on Occupational Training 1983 shows an increase - from 55.6% in 1977 to 61.6% in 1982 - of the age group being trained within the dual system. Nevertheless, overall demand for training places outstripped supply in 1982 by 15,836. In the area of tertiary sector qualifications, there were, in 1982, 9.1 requests for training places for every unfilled place. This suggests that in 1982 there was a reversal of the trend observed from 1976-80 during which period the numbers being trained in this area rose by 24.9%. The recent slight fall in tertiary sector training places offered is linked in the Report to the stagnation in employment in that area. The assumption is that employers foresee fewer vacancies occurring and thus hesitate to offer training places. From this it should be clear that the supply of qualifications in the dual system is to some extent based on future perceived need for qualified manpower. This point should be borne in mind when considering employment records.

1.3 The employment record for young people with tertiary sector qualifications

While statistics on the supply of training places are available up until 1982, data on the first employment of young people with a Certificate of Completion of Occupational Training is based on a survey conducted in 1980 i.e. at the end of a period of expansion of training places in this field. This survey[1]

showed that 53% of those who had completed training in the whole range of employment both wished and had been asked to take up employment with the firm concerned. A further 25% were offered the chance to stay but preferred to move to another firm. Only 5% wished to stay in the firm that had trained them but were not offered a place. This figure is also broken down in the survey according to type of training. We can see the figures for the tertiary sector occupations under consideration in Table 6 below.

Table 6

Proportion of young people who have completed Occupational Training but who have not been taken on by the firm although they wished it. In % by occupation trained for and by sex

Men	%
Industrial clerk	8
Clerk in wholesale and foreign trade	5
Women	
Industrial clerk	6
Office girl/clerk	5
Clerk in wholesale and foreign trade	4

From this survey we can conclude that, until 1980 at least, tertiary sector qualifications were expected to lead to the offer of a job for at least 90% of those trained.

2. Relevance of curricular content of qualifications to job content

Just as, in the case of France, we could not conclude that high unemployment pointed to qualifications whose content was unsuitable for the occupations for which they prepared, so we cannot conclude on the basis of unemployability alone, that the curricular content of German qualifications is appropriate to job content. However, the same survey (Stegmann and Kraft) also asked young people the question as to how much of the skills and knowledge gained during training could be used in their present position. The question was put only to those working in the area for which they had been trained.

Table 7

Proportion of young people who stated that they used a little, very little or none of the skills acquired during training. By sex and occupation in %.

Men	%
Clerk in wholesale and foreign trade	13
Women	
Clerk in wholesale and foreign trade	23
Industrial clerk	26
Office girl/clerk	21
Bank clerk	6

From Table 7 we can see that a large majority of trainees feel that the skills acquired during training are being called upon in their first employment. The difference between men

and women in the same occupation may reflect the fact that women are given less responsibility in their first jobs, but the survey does not comment on this point.

The views of training managers on relevance of training content were, that since the guidelines were drawn up by representatives of those working in that particular branch of industry and commerce, the framework was appropriate to firms' needs. Firms were free to introduce new skills and training content into the syllabus where they felt this was appropriate. The general view was that the problem of relevance of curriculum was more of a problem in that part of training taught in the Vocational School where it was felt that teachers, in the area of banking studies for example, could not always keep up with the most recent developments in this area.

The opinion expressed by training managers interviewed that the existing guidelines provided adequately for training needs, including the introduction of new technology, is confirmed in a recent report carried out for the Federal Ministry for Education and Science[2]. The report finds that there are scarcely any direct consequences for the content of training resulting from recent technical and organizational innovation which cannot be accommodated within existing guidelines.

3.1 The future structure of recognised occupations and training

The same report also finds that firms have until now adhered to traditional forms of work organization and to the recognized training courses described in this study. Interviews with

training managers also confirmed this finding except in the case of a firm dealing in wholesale and retail trade of petroleum products. Here it was explained that the firm now trained only in one field - Clerk in Wholesale and Foreign Trade. They had stopped training office clerks and office girls partly because, in a relatively small operation, the difference in length and quality of training between the different categories of trainees was felt to be divisive and the future career prospects of office girls and clerks were more limited. The German Trade Union Federation (Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund) also stressed their concern with the office girl/clerk area of training and pointed to their policy of upgrading the two year office girl and the 3 year office clerk training to a single new course. The DGB has proposed a single new course of enhanced training to replace these two occupations and to be known as Business Clerk (Bürowirtschaftskaufmann). However, negotiations concerning this proposed change are still proceeding. Thus from a number of sources there appear to be indications that at present the most problematic categories of training are the two year office girl and the three year office clerk. Another reason for concern with this type of training is given in the report (Baethge, Gerstenberger et al.) mentioned above. Here it is stated that the type of work for which office assistants and clerks are being trained is changing and that as a result of technical innovation there is a tendency for the job content of this occupation to become limited to a number of simple mechanical and administrative tasks. Consequently, promotion prospects in this type of work which is overwhelmingly occupied by women and girls may become extremely limited.

4. Trends in recruitment and their possible impact on content of training

All training managers interviewed stated that substantial numbers of applications for training places are now being received from young people with the Abitur or other qualifications leading to higher education. This finding substantiates the data given in Part 1, 4.2 on the trend towards higher levels of entry qualification. All firms stated that they set limits on the proportion of trainees taken on with the Abitur with the aim of giving opportunities to those with the Intermediate School Certificate and the General School Certificate. Firms used their own tests and interview procedure to select entrants and stated that they were looking for personal qualities and not just for high academic achievement. The report discussed above (Baethge, Gerstenberger et.al.) also recognises that the Intermediate School Certificate is the 'normal' minimum qualification for access to commercial training. The higher proportion of holders of the Abitur now being recruited will lead, it is felt, to greater differentation and hierarchisation of jobs in this sector. Already, firms are setting up internal courses of training which allow those who are highly qualified to move on from routine office tasks after 2 or 3 years. It seems likely in fact, that the impact of highly qualified trainees is going to have an influence on the restructuring of this area of employment equal to that of reorganisation due to new technology.

5. Conclusion

Until 1983 at least, trainees in these areas seem to have found employment easily, often taken on by the firms which had trained them. This can be partly attributed to control over entry to training places by firms which tried to adjust training policy

to future manpower requirements. The fall in the number of tertiary sector training places in 1982 can therefore be seen as firms' response to lack of growth in manpower requirements and, if this fall in the number of places continues, it could have serious consequences for the availability of training places for girls who are heavily dependent on tertiary sector employment. There appears to be general satisfaction with the content of training courses and the mechanisms to ensure that it keeps up with changing job content and organizational change. However, there seems to be reason for anxiety about the consequences of technological change for the job content of office girl/clerk occupations and the trend for more highly qualified applicants for training places is also having an impact on the definition of traditional occupational paths.

NATIONAL MONOGRAPH: GERMANY

Part Two

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1 Heinz Stegmann, Hermine Kraft Jugendliche an der schwelle von der Berufsausbildung in die Erwerbstätigkeit: Methode und erste Ergebnisse der Widerholungserhebung Ende 1980 In Mitteilungen aus der Arbeitsmarkt und Berufsforschung Verlag W. Kohlhammer No. 1 1982.

2 Baethge, Gerstenberger et.al. Entwikhlungstendenzen von Ausbildungs-und Beschäftigungstrukturen im kaufmännisch-verwaltenden Angestelltenbereich under den Bedingungen eines erhohten Angebots an Absolventen weiterführender Bildungseinrichtungen und fortschreitender Rationalisierung Soziologisches Forschungsinstitut Gottingen Marz 1982.

NATIONAL MONOGRAPH: THE UNITED KINGDOM

Part One

1. Occupations in the tertiary sector

1.1 The link between training and occupation

Occupations are not closely linked to courses of training in the U.K. by being specified by name in the title of the qualification except in the case of the examinations of the professional bodies. Thus the occupations to be considered in this study in relation to courses of training cannot be determined by selecting the range of courses of training below 'A' level leading to clerical and commercial employment. Instead, the occupations described by the Careers and Occupational Information Centre of the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) in the area designated as clerical or 'office work' have been selected together with positions in banking, insurance and accountancy. Taking the 'normal' entrance requirements together with 'normal' further training, the total qualifications acquired will usually be different from those required for university entrance but similar in their equivalence.

1.2 The occupations selected

These were taken from publications of the Careers and Occupational Information Centre (COIC) of the MSC, principally the Annual Careers Guide 1983 and the 'Close-up' leaflets, published 1982.

Clerk/Typist Counter clerk Figure clerk General clerk Secretary Typist	Clerical and office work
Insurance clerk Bank clerk Accounting Technician	

1.3 The nature of the work

The COIC have devised a matrix showing which elements of office work feature most prominently in the occupations listed above as constituting clerical and office work. This matrix is reproduced below to indicate the sorts of tasks involved in the different occupations.

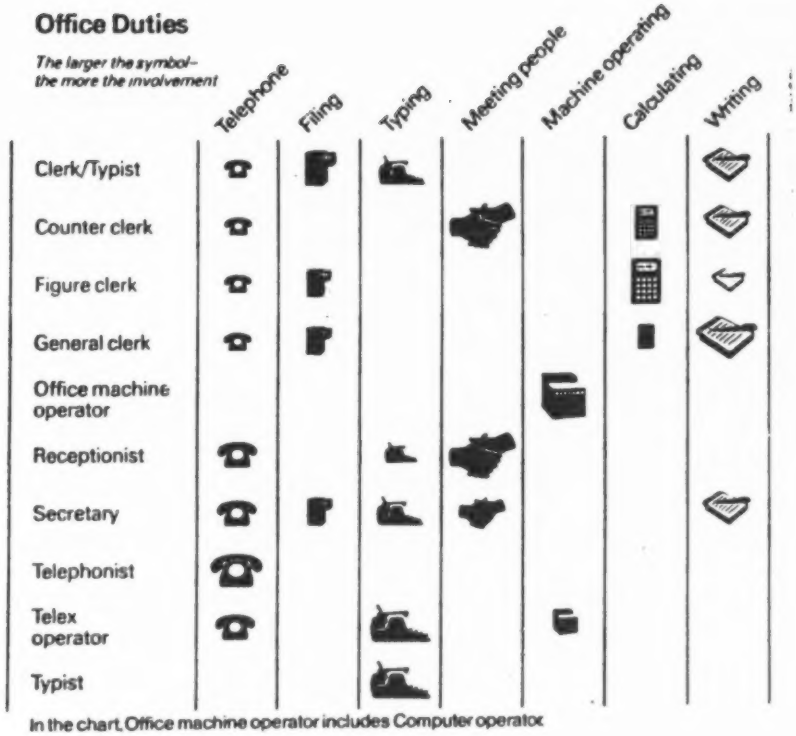


Fig.1 The types of duties expected of different categories of office workers Source: COIC 'Close-up' Careers Information bulletin CU 14

1.3.1 The bank clerk

Young entrants to banking may expect to be moved around a number of departments in their first two years working with the bank. They may start off by learning how to operate the bank's computerised accounting systems and equipment, then move to working

on banker's orders or to the job of cashier. Each type of job is graded in terms of responsibility and salary, and in-house formal training and on the job supervision is given at every stage.

1.3.2 The insurance clerk

The young entrant to insurance is similarly moved through a variety of sections and departments. Planned practical experience in different sections for set periods is combined with instruction in theory and practice by means of courses run either by the employer or at the College of Insurance. Most insurance employers have agreed to adopt a minimum basic training scheme devised by the British Insurance Association and the Chartered Insurance Institute and they frequently provide for more than the minimum.

1.3.3 The Accounting Technician

Accounting technicians normally work in support of a qualified accountant. In a public accountant's office technician's work covers the preparation and/or audit of the account of clients together with tax computations. If working with a company or organisation, technicians are likely to be concerned with the preparation of information and accounts required for financial accounting, budgeting and costing or internal audit. Training is by means of practical experience at work and full or part-time study leading to the Association of Accounting Technicians Examination or the B.E.C Financial Sector Award. These may be studied as 3 year day-release courses or 2 year full-time courses.

1.4 The occupations: entry requirements

There are no statutory minimum educational requirements for entry to these occupations. This means that in the present situation

of an over-supply of applicants for positions available, the actual levels of qualification demanded are tending to rise. The COIC gives the following 'normal' levels of qualification for the occupations under consideration.

Clerk/typist	Typing skills, CSE or 'O' levels particularly Mathematics and English or SCE 'O' grade [1]
Counter clerk	Good CSE or 'O' level, sometimes in 4 or 5 subjects usually including English or SCE 'O' grade
Figure clerk	CSE or 'O' levels particularly in Mathematics and English or SCE 'O' grade
General clerk	CSE or 'O' level, particularly in Mathematics and English or SCE 'O' grade
Secretary	'O' level, secretarial training or SCE
Insurance clerk	4 passes at GCE 'O' level or CSE grade 1 or SCE 'O' grades
Bank clerk	4 'O' level passes, SCE 'O' grade or CSE grade 1 passes including English
Accounting technician	4 'O' level/SCE 'O' grade or CSE grade 1 passes including English and a numerate subject
Typist	CSE or 'O' levls or SCE 'O' grade.

2. The nature of training for initial entrants to clerical and commercial occupations

2.1 'On the job' training

Some of the young people starting work for the first time in a clerical/commercial occupation will be given the title and status of trainee and will be taught the work they are required to do by a more experienced member of staff or by a supervisor. In banking, insurance and accountancy it is normal practice for young employees to be given the status of trainee and for them to undergo 'on the job' training which may last for up to three years. Although there is no statutory requirement for firms to provide training, it is clearly in their own interest to do so. However, in the area of office and clerical work, standards and duration of training vary from one firm to another. At one extreme, large firms, local authority and government bodies have their own training schemes which often include an element of day release - at the other extreme, training may be brief and the firm may not offer day-release - there is no statutory obligation to do so.

2.2 Formal qualifications available to young people entering clerical and commercial occupations

Courses of training for work in these areas are characterised by flexibility and a lack of statutory control or prescription. This should not be taken to mean that the courses of training available are in any way deficient. In fact, both employer and employee have at their disposal, in addition to 'on the job' training, a wide range of courses in the field of business studies, office practice, etc. which can be followed by the trainee on an 'à la carte' basis according to the needs and wishes of employer and

employee. For the U.K. it is necessary to envisage a spectrum of training experience for young people working in these areas and not a uniform procedure.

2.3 Possible combinations of 'on the job' and 'off the job' training for clerical and commercial occupations

A. Concurrent pattern

	Concurrent training (day/block release or evening classes)	
Compulsory School	Work-place	Further Education College
Vocational training element	'on the job' training	'off the job' related vocational studies course
Vocational training element	'on the job training	
	'on the job' training	'off the job related vocational studies course
	'on the job' training	

Fig.2 Possible patterns of training: concurrent structure

Figure 2 shows the possible combinations of training and vocational studies that may be made available to young people. The vocational

training element in compulsory schooling may consist of a typing course or a full certificate in business studies. Availability depends on the curriculum of individual schools. Once they have entered employment, young people may receive both 'on the job' and 'off the job' training, only 'on the job' training or neither of these two elements. An alternative model is the consecutive pattern.

B. Consecutive pattern

	Consecutive training	
Compulsory school	Further Education College	Work place
Vocational training element	Vocational studies full-time one or two years	'on the job' training
	Vocational studies full-time one or two years	'on the job' training
	Vocational studies full-time one or two years	

Fig.3 Possible patterns of training: consecutive structure

2.4 The elements composing the training package for initial entrants to clerical and commercial occupations

It is clear from the above tables that the 'training package' in the U.K. is composed of 3 main elements, all or none of which may be acquired by the person entering a tertiary sector occupation.

These elements are:-

1) A vocational course (sometimes leading to a qualification) taken at school during or after the period of compulsory education.
2) 'On the job' training.
3) Vocational studies at a College of Further Education either part-time (day/block release or evenings) or full-time. The availability of programmes of vocational study in the evening means that a young person in employment is not entirely dependent on the employer offering day-release in order to obtain training.

2.4.1 Vocational Training Elements in Schools

Where these lead to certification, this is often carried out by the same bodies that operate in the area of Further Education (The Business Education Council, the Royal Society of Arts etc). However, CSE qualifications are also offered in Typewriting and in Office Practice[2].

2.4.2 'On the job' training

As this area of training is not regulated or standardised it is not possble to give a general description of types of training.

2.4.3 The validation of qualifications

Colleges of Further Education which are provided by Local Education Authorities, together with private institutions offering courses by correspondence teach the courses of vocational studies which are planned and validated by a number of independent examining bodies

and professional associations. The principal examining bodies are:-

B.E.C Business Education Council - covering England, Wales and Northern Ireland

S.C.O.T.B.E.C. Scottish Business Education Council - covering Scotland

R.S.A. Royal Society of Arts

L.C.C.I. London Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

In addition, professional associations also devise and validate the qualifications for those working within a particular professional area. The professional associations concerned with banking, insurance and accountancy at this level are as follows:-

The Institute of Bankers

The Chartered Building Societies Institute

The Chartered Insurance Institute

The Association of Accounting Technicians.

3. The Vocational Qualifications offered by the examining bodies in the field of tertiary sector employment below the level of university entrance requirements

3.1 The Business Education Council

The Business Education Council was set up by the Secretary of State for Education and Science in May 1974. Courses are devised in active cooperation with representatives of industry, local and central government and trade unions. Emphasis is placed on practical aspects of business and the awards are considered to be relevant to and highly regarded by a whole range of employers. For the purposes of this study, awards at two levels, General and National will be considered here.

3.1.1 General Awards

B.E.C. General Awards are for school leavers with few or no academic qualifications who need a course which will be relevant to work in junior positions in offices or in distribution. Students should be at least 16 years of age and have completed an English secondary education or its equivalent. For a General Certificate, students complete four modules - three core modules and one option module. For a Diploma, students complete 8 modules, 3 core and 5 options.

3.1.2 National Awards

Students should be at least 16 years of age and have a B.E.C. General Award with credit or a total of at least 4 GCE 'O' level passes at Grades A, B or C or CSE Grade 1 passes or equivalent qualifications. Students of 19 or over may be admitted without the minimum formal entry qualifications. For a B.E.C. National Certificate, students take eight modules - four 'common' core which are compulsory for all students, two 'Board' core (General Business, Finance, Distribution, Public Administration and Public Sector) taken by students in each of the four main career areas catered for, and two options; for a Diploma they take twelve modules - four common core, two Board core and six options.

3.2 The Scottish Business Education Council

The Scottish Business Education Council was established in June 1973 by the Secretary of State for Scotland. Its Board is made up of nominees of industry and commerce and of representatives appointed by the Secretary of State for Scotland. The work of SCOTBEC is allocated to five broad sectors:

Professional Studies

Clerical and Secretarial Studies

Administrative Studies

Computer Studies

Distribution Studies

At sector committee level, most of the members are nominated by industry, commerce and the professional bodies with the remaining members being drawn from educational interests.

The levels of SCOTBEC courses relevant to this study are Stage I and Stage II.

3.2.1 Relevant courses at Stage I

Scottish Certificate in Office Skills

For Stage I no formal entry qualifications are required. Students study two core subjects and three options.

3.2.2 Relevant Courses at Stage II

SNC in Business Studies

SNC in Public Administration

SND in Business Studies

SND in Accounting

SNC in Secretarial Studies

At Stage II the normal entry qualification is a Stage I group award or 4 SCE 'O' Grade passes including English.

3.3 The Royal Society of Arts

The Society was the originator of commercial and technological examinations in the U.K. Representatives from education, industry and commerce sit on the Examinations Boards responsible for setting and validating examinations. The RSA offers both Group and Single

Subject Awards. A Group consists of three or four compulsory subjects and at least one optional subject which is specifically related to the particular group award for which the candidate has entered. Any number of additional subjects can be taken, but the principle of the award rests on all the examinations being entered for and passed at the same Series. The Group Awards are the only RSA awards which are considered relevant to this study. Group Awards are available as follows:-

Stage I

Diploma in Office Studies

Diploma in General Reception

Stage II

Diploma in Secretarial Studies

Diploma in Business Studies

3.4 The London Chamber of Commerce and Industry

The London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Commercial Education Committee was first formed in 1890 to provide a system of qualifications for the commercial world. Examinations are designed to allow candidates to demonstrate elements of practical understanding and application considered by the LCCI to be the 'criteria of employability'. The LCCI also offers groups and single subject awards. Here we shall consider only the group awards.

Elementary Stage

Certificate in Commercial Studies

Group Certificates in Shorthand and Typewriting

Intermediate Stage

Business Studies Certificate

Group Certificates in Book-keeping

Group Certificate in Shorthand and Typewriting

3.5 Equivalence of Qualifications awarded by the various examining bodies

It will be noted that the qualifications set out above are awarded at two levels. By a system of mutual recognition of equivalences, these awards have been ranked by the examining bodies in relation to each other and in relation to the system of academic qualifcations ('O' and 'A' levels). Table 1 below sets out these equivalences.

Table 1

Table of equivalences of examinations of principal professional examining bodies in the U.K.

Academic qualifications	BEC	SCOTBEC	RSA	LCCI
Two 'A' levels	National Awards	Stage II		
Above 'O' level but below 2 'A' levels			Stage II	Intermediate
Equivalent to 4 'O' level passes	General Awards	Stage I		Elementary (Distinction)
Slightly below 4 'O' level standard			Stage I	Elementary (Pass)

3.6 Entry requirements for courses of vocational study

As we have seen from Table 1, there are 2 levels of professional qualification available within the area with which we are concerned, those qualifications which are above the level of 4 'O' level passes and those which are below it. For convenience the first of these levels (above 4 'O' levels) will be designated as Level A, the second, (below 4 'O' levels) will be designated as Level B.

Level B	Entry requirements
B.E.C. General	At least 16 years old, completed secondary education
SCOTBEC Stage I	No formal entry requirements
RSA Stage I	No formal entry requirements
LCCI Elementary	No formal entry requirements
Level A	
B.E.C. National	B.E.C. General Award with Credit or 4 GCE 'O' level passes at grades A,B or C.
SCOTBEC Stage II	SCOTBEC Stage I Group Award or 4 SCE 'O' Grade passes including English
RSA Stage II	No formal entry requirements
LCCI Intermediate	No formal entry requirements.

The B.E.C. National Awards and the SCOTBEC Stage II Awards are accepted by Universities and polytechnics in the U.K. for entry to undergraduate courses of study.

4. The role of the Professional Associations in the field of training for banking, insurance and accountancy

4.1 Initial requirements of the Professional Associations

As far as office/clerical work is concerned, further vocational study is a matter to be decided by individual employers and/or employees. In contrast to general clerical and business employment where trainee employees are not required to obtain membership of a professional association by obtaining a series of specified qualifications, employees in the field of banking, insurance and accountancy are usually expected to work for at least the first level of professional qualifications. It should be stressed that it is not necessary to obtain these qualifications before entry to these occupations although it is possible to do so. Most trainees study on a day release basis, but those who cannot obtain day release may study in the evening or by correspondence. Thus it can be seen that the professional associations in these three areas themselves regulate access to the profession and ensure that there exists adequate professional development courses for those within the professions. At post-degree and higher professional level, courses are usually taught by colleges run by the professional associations themselves or by groups of employers, however, at sub-degree level, the four professional associations in this field (see 2.5) recognise the awards of the B.E.C. and of SCOTBEC as constituting an appropriate professional qualification at the first level of professional qualification. This practice has the advantage that B.E.C. and other courses are available nationwide in a large number of colleges on a full-time or part-time basis. At the same time, many B.E.C. options have been devised with the needs of the professional associations very much in mind and the B.E.C. courses, if they include the options specified by the professional associations, adequately provide the skills and aknowledge necessary at this level of professional training.

5. Further educational opportunities

5.1 B.E.C. and SCOTBEC Awards

As for the other national monographs, it is appropriate here to distinguish between the opportunity to obtain further general academic qualifications at a polytechnic or university and the opportunity to obtain further professional qualifications on the basis of sub-degree courses of vocational study. Of the four principal courses of vocational study which may be taken at sub-degree level, only B.E.C. National Awards and SCOTBEC Stage II have been recognised as meeting the minimum requirements for certain university and CNAA first degree courses. B.E.C. and SCOTBEC Level A awards also confer the right to study for a vocationally-orientated, degree equivalent Higher Award with the same entitlement to student grant as students on a degree course. The qualifications conferred by the professional associations do not only qualify the holder to advance to the next stage of professional education but are often accepted by other professional associations for entry to a stage of qualification within another profession.

5.2 The Institute of Bankers

Entry requirements	Level	Usual Study Period	Award
4 'O' Levels or equivalent, including English Language	Stage I a) B.E.C. National Award or equivalent	2 years	B.E.C. National
1 or more 'A' levels plus 'O' level English Language or equivalents	b) Conversion Course	1 year	None - course gives right of entry to Stage 2

Entry requirements	Level	Usual Study Period	Award
Part 1, Stage 1 or recognised degree	Stage 2 Banking Diploma		
	Parts A and B	2 years	
	Part C	1 year	Banking Diploma (AIB)
Either A recognised degre plus 'direct entry' year (two special papers and background reading) or AIB	FINANCIAL STUDIES DIPLOMA	2 - 5 years	Financial Studies Diploma (Dip FS)

Tuition for Institute of Bankers' courses is available on a full-time, part-time or correspondence basis or by private study. Courses are run by Colleges of Further Education and by private institutions which are the principal providers of correspondence courses. The qualifications at Stage 2 level and beyond are only open to persons already engaged in banking employment.

5.3 The Chartered Building Societies Institute

Student Membership

This is open to those already employed by a building society and having obtained a B.E.C. National Award, or 4 passes at GCE 'O' level and 2 at 'A' level or an equivalent qualification.

Associate Membership of the Institute

In order to be admitted to the examinations for Associateship, members must already have obtained student membership. The Institute anticipates that the period of study for each examination leading to the Associateship will be in the region of 150 hours. At present, students are required to sit six subjects, although this will be increased to eight shortly. Students generally take between 3 and 4 years to complete the Examination. Tuition is available at local colleges or by correspondence. The policy of individual societies regarding paid study leave varies from society to society. Some allow students some day release whereas others expect students to study in their own time.

5.4 The Chartered Insurance Institute

Introductory Examination or B.E.C. National Award

Qualifying Examination (Associateship)

Qualifying Examination (Fellowship)

Examinations are devised and regulated by the Chartered Insurance Institute but taught in a variety of institutions - colleges of Further Education, private colleges - and are available as full-time, part-time and correspondence courses. They are open only to persons already in employed in insurance.

5.5 The Association of Accounting Technicians

The examinations of the Associations are more limited in scope than those of the three institutions outlined above since the highest level

of the Association's examinations only leads to qualified technician status. The Association's examinations are:-

Entry requirements	Examinations
4 'O' level GCE subjects or equivalent or B.E.C. General Award with Credit or RSA Stage II Or LCCI Stage II	Level I, II, III

Level III standard confers full membership of the Association. Alternatively, full membership may be acquired by obtaining the B.E.C. National Diploma for Accounting Technicians or the SCOTBEC Scottish National Diploma in Accounting. Candidates for membership of the AAT must produce evidence of practical experience in financial and/or accounting work and are required to record their work experience in the Practical Experience Record (PER). Courses for the AAT's examinations are available on full-time and part-time basis at a large number of Further Education Colleges and Colleges of Technology and at a variety of private institutions, some of which offer correspondence courses.

Because of the wide variety of provision of courses leading to further professional qualification, any individual working in the appropriate field is able to proceed by part-time or correspondence or private study to obtain higher qualifications. Study leave is at the discretion of employers. Although this system is theoretically

a very open one, it demands a very high level of commitment and motivation from individuals working for the examinations. The failure rate of e.g. the Chartered Insurance Institute's examinations is correspondingly high (57.3% at Associateship level in 1982).

6. Where courses of vocational studies are taught

6.1 The distinction between validating bodies and course providers

As has already been pointed out, a distinction must be made between examining and validating bodies which are independent and wholly or partially self-financing and the course providers. The examining and validating bodies do not provide courses leading to the qualifications that they confer. The courses are provided by a variety of publicly and privately-funded institutions. In the public sector, these may be Further Education Colleges, Colleges of Technology or Colleges of Adult Education. According to the 1944 Education Act, Local Education Authorities are bound to provide further education, i.e. non-advanced education beyond the compulsory stage and this has traditionally been provided in colleges offering a wide range of vocationally orientated courses, together with courses leading to general academic qualifications such as 'O' and 'A' level GCE qualifications. Larger colleges, often providing for certain vocational training needs on a regional basis, are designated Colleges of Technology and provide the degree-equivalent courses leading to T.E.C. and B.E.C. Higher National Awards. Courses of vocational study described in this monograph are provided on a full-time basis, also on a part-time basis for day release students and in the evenings for students who cannot obtain day release. However, a growing number of secondary

schools now offer pupils the chance to study for an RSA award or a B.E.C. General Award either during or following on the period of compulsory education. The RSA 'Guide to the Examinations 1983-4' sums up the situation in this way:-

> 'There can be few, if any, technical colleges, colleges of further education or evening institutes which do not run courses for a wide range of the Board's examinations. Some advanced certificate courses are also offered at polytechnics and colleges of technology, whilst many secondary schools, particularly those offering post 'O' level secretarial and clerical courses, enter pupils for the examinations'.

Courses leading to secretarial, clerical and other qualifications are also offered in private institutions. These may be specific to one professional sector e.g. banking and offer part-time and correspondence study courses.

6.2 The courses - by whom they are taught

Lecturing staff in L.E.A. provided Further Education Colleges are employed by the providing authority. No specific categories of teaching staff are laid down in advance (i.e. particular levels of graduate or professional qualifications) nor is it mandatory for staff to possess a teaching qualification such as the Postgraduate Certificate required for most teachers in primary and secondary schools. However, staff in the Further Education sector are usually well-qualified, and, especially in the Colleges of Technology, they may be very highly qualified. The teaching force in Further Education is composed of 78,515 teachers of whom 46,152 are non-graduates. Of the total number, 35,272 are trained and 43,233 are untrained[3].

7. Content of vocational studies syllabuses

A detailed comparison of syllabuses and analysis of points of similarity and difference will be undertaken in the final comparative section of this report. At this point, as in the other monographs, a brief analysis of the ratio of general to professional studies will be made. As they are most widely recognised, only the B.E.C. courses will be considered here.

B.E.C. General

The courses are composed of Core modules and Option modules. Core modules are designed to develop the basic knowledge, understanding and skills of numeracy and literacy necessary for students who have recently entered, or are about to enter, business. Option modules are mainly concerned with more specific professional knowledge and skills. To gain a B.E.C. General Certificate, students are required to complete 4 modules - three core and one option and to gain a B.E.C. General Diploma, students are required to complete 8 modules, three core and five option. The Core Modules with their emphasis on the development of skills of communication and literacy thus account for 3/4 of the student's time on the part-time Certificate course and for 3/8 of the students's time on the longer full or part-time Diploma course. However, since the Core Modules are strongly related to business practice it may not be appropriate to designate them as 'general' as opposed to 'professional' studies especially since B.E.C. courses have been conceived with the aim of providing a broad educational foundation through the medium of business and professional studies.

B.E.C. National

These awards retain the concept of Core and Option modules introduced at General level but introduce a third type of course

known as the Board Core Module. Board core modules are directed at knowledge, understanding and skills relevant to a more specific range of careers (e.g. Careers in Finance, Distribution or General Business). To gain a B.E.C. National Certificate, students are required to complete 8 modules - four common Core, two Board core and two option; for a B.E.C. National Diploma they must complete twelve modules - four common core, two Board core and six options. Thus it can be seen that National Certificate students will spend half their study time on the more general Core Options, while National Diploma student will spend 1/3rd of their time in Core Option. However, as mentioned above, it is probably not very useful to try to make the general/professional studies distinction in connection with B.E.C. courses.

NATIONAL MONOGRAPH: THE UNITED KINGDOM

Part One

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1 C.S.E. (Certificate of Secondary Education), G.C.E. (General Certificate of Education), S.C.E. (Scottish Certificate of Education) are all single-subject examinations taken at or before the age of 16.

2 Prais S. and Wagner K in Some Practical Aspects of Human Capital Investment Training Standards in Five Occupations in Britain and Germany National Institute Economic Review 1983 p.59 state that 80,000 school leavers attempted C.S.E. Typewriting in 1977.

3 DES Statistics of Education Vol. 4 1979 Teachers Tables 25 and 26.

NATIONAL MONOGRAPH: THE UNITED KINGDOM

Part Two

1. The present context of qualifications

1.1 Trends in study for vocational qualifications

In this section of the U.K. study an attempt will be made to put into perspective the outline of provision and of providing bodies given in Part 1. There is no attempt to provide statistics and data precisely comparable to those provided for France and Germany since statistics available in the area of vocational training vary so widely from one member-state to another[1].

1.2 Percentages of school-leavers proceeding to secretarial professional and vocational courses

Table 1 School leavers in England

Percentages by destination

	1973-74	1975-76	1977-78	1979-80	1980-81	1980-81 (000s)
Boys						
Total leavers (000s)	329.2	343.0	372.1	383.9	374.4	374.4
Destination (percentages)						
Degree courses	*8.2*	*8.7*	*9.5*	*8.6*	*9.3*	34.8
Teacher training courses	*0.8*	*0.5*	*0.2*	*0.1*	*0.2*	0.6
GCE A level courses	*1.5*	*1.8*	*1.9*	*2.0*	*2.9*	10.8
GCE O level courses	*1.3*	*1.5*	*1.5*	*1.4*	*1.8*	6.8
Secretarial courses	–	–	–	–	–	0.1
Other professional and vocational courses	*5.1*	*6.2*	*5.4*	*5.6*	*8.0*	30.0
Available for employment	*72.1*	*64.5*	*73.8*	*73.5*	*67.8*	253.9
Not known	*11.0*	*16.6*	*8.4*	*8.7*	*10.0*	37.5
Girls						
Total leavers (000s)	312.7	323.6	352.2	366.8	359.5	359.5
Destination (percentages)						
Degree courses	*4.7*	*5.3*	*5.7*	*6.4*	*6.7*	24.1
Teacher training courses	*3.9*	*2.1*	*0.9*	*0.6*	*0.7*	2.6
GCE A level courses	*1.5*	*2.2*	*2.3*	*2.7*	*3.4*	12.2
GCE O level courses	*1.2*	*1.6*	*1.8*	*1.7*	*2.3*	8.2
Secretarial courses	*4.4*	*4.7*	*5.2*	*5.0*	*5.2*	18.5
Other professional and vocational courses	*7.2*	*9.3*	*9.8*	*10.8*	*13.7*	49.3
Available for employment	*67.9*	*58.9*	*65.3*	*64.2*	*58.4*	209.9
Not known	*9.1*	*15.8*	*9.0*	*8.6*	*9.7*	34.7

When we examine Table 1, we can see that the steady increase in the numbers continuing with 'other professional and vocational courses' has occurred largely as a result of a fall in the numbers of young people 'available for employment', strongly reinforcing the view that the difficult employment situation for young people is encouraging more of them to seek further qualifications rather than to look for a job. This trend is more marked for girls than it is for boys. If we assume that 'secretarial' refers to courses composed principally of shorthand and typing, it is interesting to note that the percentage of girls choosing this type of training has increased by only 0.8 over the period '73-74 - '80-81, whereas the percentage choosing 'other professional and vocational courses, including B.E.C. courses, has increased, for girls from 7.2 to 13.7 per cent. Figures issued by the B.E.C. confirm this trend at B.E.C. General Level, where numbers have risen from 12,000 (approximately) in 1975-6 to 18,000 in 1981-2[(2)].

1.3 Percentages of young people studying for vocational qualifications in day release while in employment

In Part 1 of the U.K. monograph, it was pointed out that young people could be trained for employment in a variety of ways and that one of these combinations was a combination of employment and study on a day-release. When we look at the proportions of young people training by this route for the period '73-74 to '81-82, we note a very sharp decrease in the proportions of young people in employment with part-time study[(3)]. In 1973-4 27% of boys and 8% of girls were in employment with part-time day-study, by 1981-2 the proportion of employed young people with part-time day

study had fallen to 11% for boys and 4% for girls. This is a very low percentage indeed for both sexes but especially for girls, in comparison with Germany. However, the fall in the amount of day release available over this period can be largely accounted for by the fall in the numbers of young people employed, rather than by reduction in the amount of day release available to employed young people.

1.4 Day-release training for young people in clerical and related employment

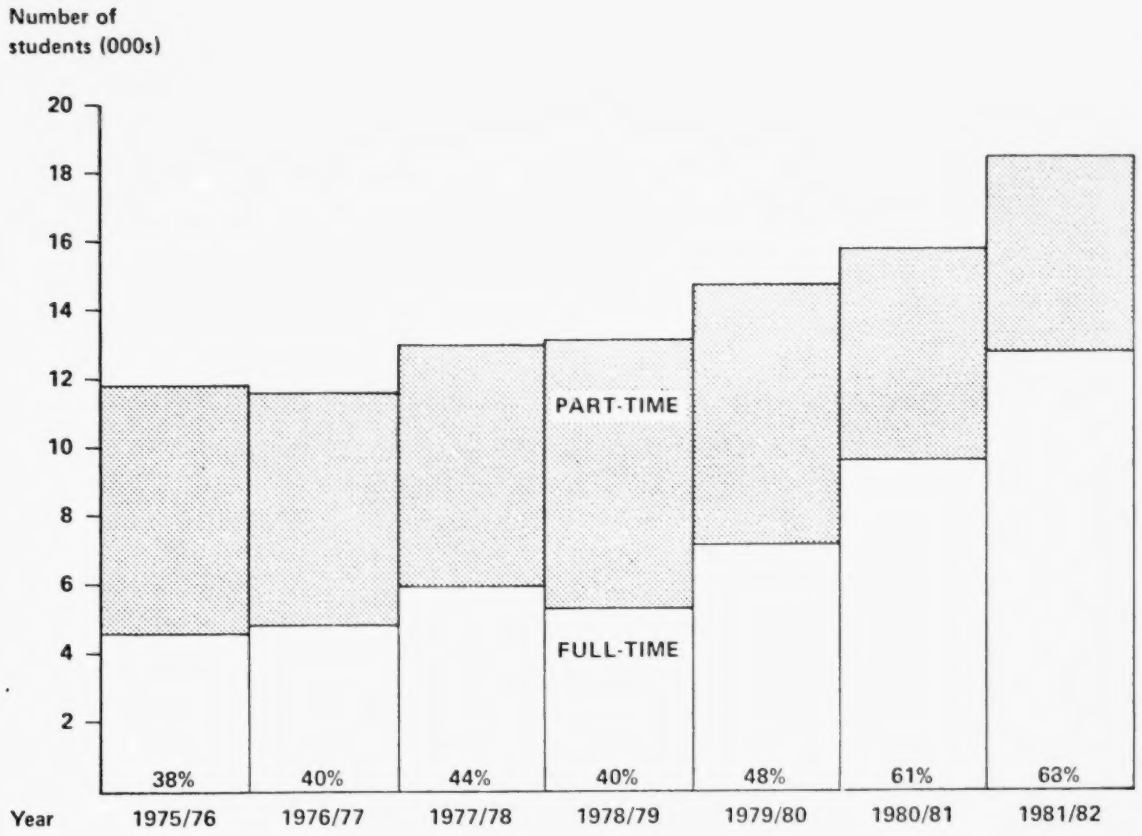
In England and Wales in 1979, 5.0% of 16 year old boys in employment and 32.9 of 16 year old girls in employment were working in areas defined as 'clerical and related'[4]. Of the boys 1.1% were defined as 'apprentices' i.e. with a proper training agreement, including day-release, of the girls, 6.6% were defined as apprentices.

1.5 The effect of the fall in day-release provision on study for vocational qualifications

The fall in the number of young people in employment with day release is reflected in the proportions studying full and part-time for B.E.C. General Awards over the period 1975-6 - 1981-2.

Figure 1

Numbers of General Level Students registered/enrolled by route of study 1975-81

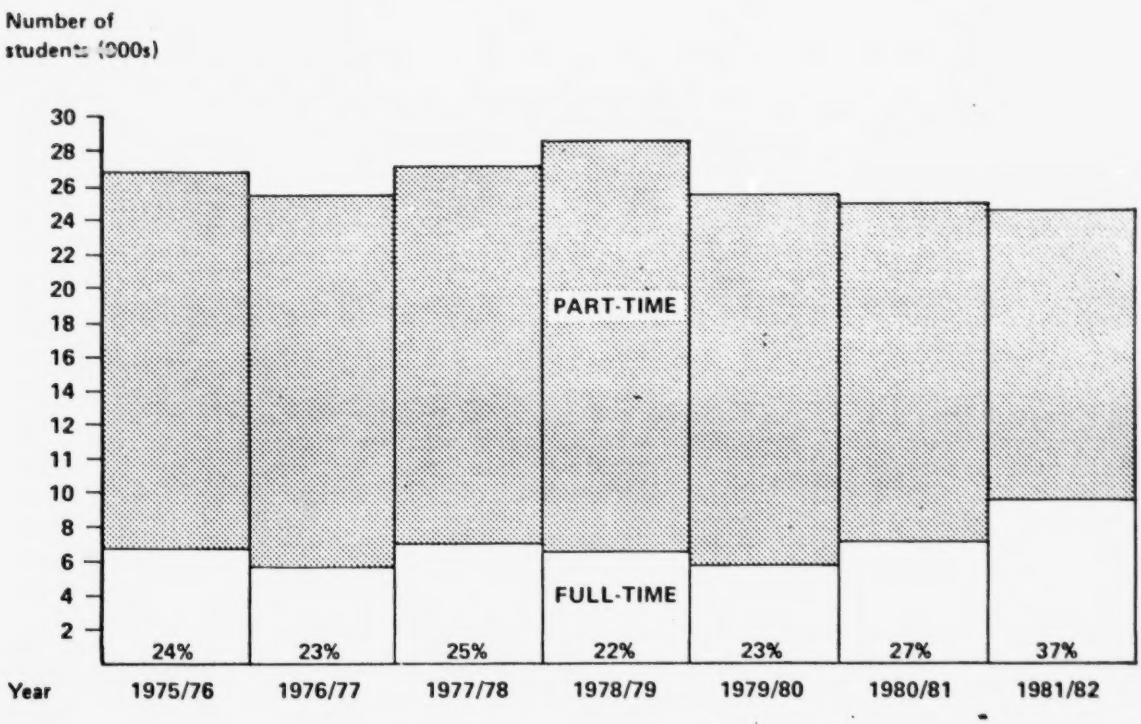


Source: Business Education Council Annual Report 1981-2 p.18.

Many more B.E.C. students at General Level are now studying full-time than in 1975, a trend which matches the other trends towards more full-time vocational study and less day release by employers. For B.E.C. National Level Courses, the number of part-time students has shown a downward trend since 1979-80 while the number of full-time students has also increased. These trends can also be interpreted as reluctance of employers to release employees for part-time study and, as Figure 2 shows, the shortfall in part-time students had not been compensated for by a sufficient rise in full-time students to maintain the level of 1975 on B.E.C. National courses.

Figure 2

Numbers of National Level Students registered/enrolled by route of study 1975-81



Source: Business Education Council Annual Report 1981-2.

2. The development of the Manpower Services Commission Youth Training Scheme (Y.T.S.)

2.1 The impact of the introduction of Y.T.S.

Both employer and employee representatives agreed that 1983 represents a watershed for the provision of initial training and for the pattern of initial employment in the U.K. Briefly, every 16 year old school leaver who so wishes is to be admitted to the Youth Training Scheme. The Scheme lasts for one year and during this year the young person is employed or given 'work experience' on employers' premises and receives related vocational education at a College of Further Education or in an Employer's Training Centre. This means that for the 16 year old population at least the proportion involved in a course of work and related study will rise dramatically from the 5% of all 16 year olds predicted for 1981-2[5] to approximately 55% of the age-group - depending on how places are taken up on the scheme.

2.2 The impact of Y.T.S. on training for clerical and related occupations

At present it does not appear that new qualifications will be introduced in the field of clerical and related training in order to provide for Y.T.S. trainees. During their periods in Further Education Colleges, trainees on the scheme working in the area of clerical and related occupations will study for the awards already offered in this area. The MSC has agreed with all the leading certificating bodies (B.E.C., RSA, LCCI) that many of their qualifications provide suitable methods of assessment and certification for young people on Y.T.S. programmes. It therefore seems unlikely that the pattern of existing qualification is likely to be greatly modified by the Y.T.S. It is clear, however, that with

the monitoring and logging of work experience required by the Y.T.S., the U.K. is moving towards a pattern of training similar to that of Germany. If Y.T.S. were to be extended to a two or three year period with the employer progressively taking over responsibility for paying the trainee and controlling the training, the system would undoubtedly be very similar to that of Germany.

2.3 Conclusions on Y.T.S.

This is not a point in time when any evaluation of Y.T.S. can be made except to say that it has already profoundly modified the amount of linked training and work available to young people aged 16 in the U.K. From the point of view of moving towards equivalence with Germany or France, however, the scheme would have to be extended for at least another year to provide two full years of training and work for equivalence to become a possibility.

3. Changes relating to the qualifications offered for clerical and related occupations in the U.K.

3.1 Changes in standard of entry required for clerical and related occupations

In Section 1 of the U.K. monograph par. 1.3 it was stated that the formal entry requirements for clerical and related occupations were based on academic qualifications not on professional/vocational qualifications. One expert stressed that in the 'white-collar' occupations employers rely heavily on academic qualifications in selecting trainees and that they will inevitably prefer 'O' level passes to low grades of CSE examinations. In large conurbations (London, Manchester) where this issue was discussed with Careers

Officers they agreed that when employers have a large number of candidates from which to select they will choose those with the higher-level academic qualifications because of the importance of high-level language skills, especially written language in this type of occupation. However, the situation in a smaller country town or isolated industrial area may be quite different. Young trainees cannot be expected to travel long distances and must be recruited locally. One personnel manager in a small market town pointed out that the standards of academic attainment in the town's comprehensive school were disappointingly low and that he was bound to take on young people with low grades in CSE examinations and consequently with a poor grasp of mathematics and English Language. Only 26.6% of school leavers in England in 1980-1 had obtained 1-4 higher grades in 'O' level or CSE i.e. had obtained the sort of qualification profile that employers would like to recruit from[6]. Prais and Wagner, in a Discussion Paper published by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research[7] conclude that German pupils in the lower half of the ability range achieve a considerably higher standard in mathematics and other core subjects than do English pupils in the same ability range. This finding helps to understand the relatively low level of mathematical skills required of B.E.C. General candidates, 54% of whom will have obtained no 'O' level or CSE Grade 1 passes[8].

3.2 Standards of entry required for initial entrants to banking and insurance

Experts consulted in this field generally agreed that about 50% of new recruits have 'A' levels and about 50% have at least four

'O' levels Grades A-C. Day release for study for B.E.C. National Awards was reported to be automatic for those wishing for it at the bank interviewed for this study[9]. The bank recruits almost exactly half and half, male and female recruits and between 30 and 40% of those studying on day release for B.E.C. National are female. This situation is rather different from that reported in a recent study published by the Equal Opportunities Commission[10]. In this study, two banks were interviewed and as a result the study claims that banks recruited their 'O' level entrants predominantly among girls in order to avoid the need to give day release. The 'A' level recruits were predominantly boys who were actively encouraged to seek day-release for further study and to consider themselves as 'career entrants'. Whether or not these attitudes are found in all the clearing banks, the small percentage of girls being granted day-release reported in par. 1.3 of this section and the overall findings of the E.O.C. study of lack of encouragement and lack of understanding towards girls' needs for day release on the part of careers officers and employers is verydisturbing.

4. Employers' and union attitudes to B.E.C. General Courses

4.1 The scope of the survey

B.E.C. courses (both General and National) were discussed with 3 personnel managers[11] and the education officers of two trade-unions[12]. In addition, use was made of a recent survey of B.E.C. General Awards by the Business Education Council in which employers were asked for their opinions on a number of issues[13].

4.2 Finding of the survey of employers' and union views

Personnel managers interviewed were generally satisfied with the type of preparation given to students by B.E.C. courses, as the personnel manager in banking pointed out, they could hardly be too critical since the banks themselves had been heavily involved in drawing up the syllabus for the banking and finance options of the B.E.C. National Awards. The wholesale manufacturing firm runs B.E.C. General and National courses on its own premises both for its own clerical employees and for 90 Y.T.S. trainees. Some of the Y.T.S. trainees had been recruited with several 'O' levels and were studying for B.E.C. National Awards. The personnel manager concerned felt that one year of Y.T.S. training including study for B.E.C. National was sufficient initial training for a junior clerical position. The smaller firm interviewed relied to some extent on vocational qualifications (especially CSE Typing and CSE Office Skills) obtained at school, but had also sent some trainees on B.E.C. courses. One of the unions interviewed (NALGO) runs its own distance learning unit to assist its members studying for B.E.C. General and National and for other awards by correspondence. NALGO's view of B.E.C. qualifications is generally positive although they stressed that the situation on day-release is very patchy and that local unpaid branch officials do not usually have the time to devote to making sure that trainees are receiving sufficient supervision.

4.3 Findings of the B.E.C. Review of General Level Awards

In the review of its General Level Awards, the Business Education Council carried out 58 interviews with employers who already had some connection with B.E.C. courses. On the relevance of the

courses, 53% replied that 'No aspects of the course were of little or no relevance' and there were many positive comments, the courses were considered a 'good basis for work', 'seems to give confidence to employees'. However, many organizations commented on the need for more options on 'new office technology' and the book-keeping option mentioned in the summary report as being especially extensive is rated as the 'most difficult' module by a sample of students surveyed. The fact that B.E.C. General courses are suitable for the academically less able was also mentioned by employers, and a number of groups considered that the courses cater to too broad an ability band, and that the course was too basic for the more able students.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The degree of satisfaction with existing qualifications

A majority of employers were satisfied with B.E.C. General level qualifications as a preparation for employment. These employers were, however, employers already involved in some way with B.E.C. courses. A Careers Officer was of the opinion that generally employers were confused by the multiplicity of qualifications on offer and did not sufficiently appreciate B.E.C. Awards, preferring to recruit employees with conventional 'O' and 'A' levels. However, from those employers familiar with the system there was little demand for change, apart from the request for more modules or options dealing with new technology.

5.2 The situation with regard to day-release

This is clearly unsatisfactory both quantitatively (leaving aside the Y.T.S. initiative) and in terms of the way in which girls'

aspirations to training are handled by careers officers and employers. The B.E.C. General Awards Review reports a number of employer opinions that the amount of day-release granted has been cut back because of the recession. In addition, a study conducted by the Statistical Division of the Alfred Marks Bureau (14) which surveyed 381 employers found that staff training was one of the areas substantially cut back by firms trying to make savings and comments 'It is both sad and short-sighted of management that staff training should feature so prominently in the list of "cuts" at a time when many companies are expecting their staff to take on extra duties'.

Without the introduction of Y.T.S., the amount of day-release training would undoubtedly have fallen still further.

5.3 The employment situation for employees with clerical qualifications

As has already been pointed out in note 1 section 1.1 of Part Two, there are no nationally available statistics relating employment/unemployment to qualifications held. On the one hand, a Careers Officer in the Manchester Careers Service considered that there would be no difficulty in finding employment for a young school leaver with one or two 'O' levels who had also obtained qualifications in shorthand and typing. Another study by the Alfred Marks Statistical Division (15) which questioned a sample of 434 managers who were seeking to recruit more experienced staff reported that only 21% of the sample surveyed expected to receive fewer than 6 applications for each job vacancy whereas in 1979 47% expected to interview no more than 5 applicants for each vacancy. Another indicator of the employment situation for mature applicants

are the statistics for women placed in employment after following MSC T.O.P.S. programmes[16]. Of the women participating in 1980-1 43% were single/widowed/divorced and therefore classified as 'breadwinners' for themselves or for themselves or their families. Of those trained in 1980-1, 53% were placed in employment after doing a T.O.P.S. course, 48% in employment relative to the skills learnt[17]. Given the inevitable problems facing mature women entering a new sector of employment for the first time, this is an encouraging record.

None of the rather disparate data cited above can give us any precise indication of the state of the labour market for employees with clerical qualifications. Nevertheless, there is no indication that such employees face unusual difficulties in obtaining employment.

5.4 Training and employment in clerical and related occupations and the introduction of new office technology

As in other member states studied, experts, managers and union officers consulted did not foresee fundamental changes in training taking place as a result of the introduction of new technology, but predicted that certain skills would need to be more intensively taught, especially English and Communication skills as the range of the office workers' duties was widened[18]. The same report states that 'The speed and extent of change will vary from industry to industry and from company to company and currently T.O.P.S. training can only be expected to provide an appreciation of its effects. However, some courses will need to include more specific familiarisation training'.

Many studies have been conducted in the U.K. on the possible effects of new technology on future office employment but these must necessarily be speculative. It seems more useful at this stage to try to assess the impact on employment during the years 1979-81 as is attempted in the study by the Statistical Division of the Alfred Marks Bureau in Recruitment in Recession (op.cit). In this survey of 381 employers, the study found that the group where the greatest reduction in staff had been made was in that of clerk (24% of reductions in that area). The study goes on to state that 'many companies have achieved increased productivity levels at a time when staff numbers are being stabilised or even reduced by installing high technology equipment' but the report states that this did not lead to large reductions in staffing levels but enabled firms to cope with loss through natural wastage or increase productivity with the same number of staff:
'Staff benefitted by the introduction of high technology equipment in all but 13% of firms who stated that the installation had led to reductions in staffing levels. For the majority, increased efficiency (70%) and increased productivity (54%) were the results achieved by introducing word processors'. A difference is noted between large and small firms in willingness to introduce word processors - only 22% of those employing less than 500 were keen to increase their use of new technology within the next eighteen months.

Part Two

1 For example, it has not proved possible to find an analysis of unemployment of young people according to type and level of vocational training in the U.K. Furthermore, there are no recent figures available on full and part-time study by occupational area in further education - the latest study dates from 1979. (DES Statistics of Education).

2 Business Education Council: Annual Report 1981-2 p. 18 Fig. 2.

3 Statistical Bulletin of the DES 2/83 Table 2.

4 Employment Gazette March 1982 pp. 117-120 'First Employment of Young People'. The figures for Scotland in 1981 were boys 7.6, girls 40.3 (Source Employment Gazette March 1983 'Labour Market for Young People in Scotland').

5 Statistical Bulletin of the DES 2/83 Table 3.

6 Statistical Bulletin of the DES 10/82 Table 3.

7 Schooling standards in Britain and Germany: Some Summary Comparisons Bearing on Economic Efficiency by S J Prais and Karin Wagner Discussion Paper No. 60 (Industry Series No. 14).

8 Business Education Council Annual Report 1981-2 p. 21 Fig. 11.

9 The bank did not wish to be named in this study.

10 Day Release for Girls. An Investigation into why so few girls receive time off work for part-time study. Yves Bennett and Dawn Carter April 1983. Equal Opportunities Commission.

11 The personnel manager of a large clearing bank, the personnel manager of a medium-sized building firm (approx. 20 clerical staff) and the personnel manager of a large cooperative wholesale society (1000 clerical staff).

12 Technician and Supervisory Staff and (TASS) National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO).

13 Business Education Council B.E.C. General Awards Review Autumn 1982.

14 Recruitment in recession. A study of the effect of economic crisis on office employment policies.

15 Recession and the Job Market.

16 The Training Opportunities Scheme offers mature adults the chance to acquire new skills. In 1980-1 92% of women on the scheme were trained in the clerical/secretarial area taking the same type of qualification as those described for initial entrants in Part I of the U.K. monograph.

17 Figures supplied by M.S.C. Training Services Division, Moorfoot, Sheffield.

18 M.S.C. Clerical and Commercial Training: The Way Forward Training Opportunities Directorate March 1981 p.7. The need for better communication skills is also emphasised in the RSA Study Group Report 'Office Technology: the implications for education and training in the 1980's.

SYNTHESIS REPORT

1. Comparison of the institutional context of qualifications

1.1 Structure of synthesis report: Comparative survey of principal aspects of qualifications structure

The three national monographs on training and qualifications available in the areas of office work, banks and insurance have each been constructed to cover the same aspects of provision and qualifications structure in the three member-states. In this synthesis section we shall therefore first compare the principal aspects of provision in the U.K., Germany and France before proceeding to a more detailed examination of syllabuses and, finally, a discussion of the feasibility of attempting to establish equivalence.

1.2 The interdependence of training, qualifications and occupations

The first area considered in each national monograph was the definition of the occupations themselves based on the careers literature available in the three member-states. The first point to be noted here is differences in the extent to which entry to a commercial/clerical type occupation is conditional upon having followed a course of professional training and having obtained a given qualification. The difference between the member-states in this respect is considerable as can be seen from Fig. 1 (below).

	Training	Qualification	Occupation
Germany	on and off the job	conditional upon period of training	conditional upon qualification
France	off the job	not conditional upon on the job training[1]	not conditional upon qualification
U.K.	on and off the job	not conditional upon on the job training	not conditional upon qualification

Fig. 1. Degrees of interdependency between training, qualification and occupation in Germany, France and the U.K.

We can therefore see from Fig. 1 (above) that whereas in France and the U.K. it is not necessary to have obtained certain qualifications in order to enter upon a tertiary sector occupation (although most employees will have obtained some relevant qualifications), in Germany the occupation can only be entered after the prescribed period of training and after obtaining the requisite qualification.

1.3 Comparison of commercial and clerical occupations as defined in careers literature

At first sight it might appear inevitable but also unimportant for a study of qualifications that the occupations included in this sector in the three member states either do not correspond closely to each other or have no equivalent in another member state. However, since it is in the nature of vocational qualification to relate the course of training very closely to the chosen occupation, the lack of similarity between the three member states in the definition of some commercial and clerical occupations leads to a lack of similarity in the content of syllabuses. Table 1 below shows the degree of perceived correspondence between tertiary sector occupations in the three member states based upon careers literature and discussions with national experts.

Table 1. Approximations of tertiary sector occupations in France, U.K. and Germany

France	U.K.	Germany
assistant book-keeper (aide-comptable)	Figure clerk	-
book-keeper/secretary (secrétaire comptable)	-	office clerk (Bürokaufmann/frau)
book-keeper (comptable/mécanographe)	Accounting technician	-
invoice clerk (dactylo-facturière)	-	-
correspondence clerk (sténodactylo-correspondancière)	General clerk	office clerk (Bürokaufmann/frau)
secretary (secrétaire sténodactylographe)	secretary	- (2)
Shorthand-typist (sténodactylographe)	clerk/typist	office assistant (Bürogehilfin)
insurance clerk (employé d'assurances)	insurance clerk	insurance clerk (Versicherungs-kaufmann/frau)
bank clerk (employé de banque)	bank clerk	bank clerk (Bankkaufmann/frau)
business/commercial clerk (agent de commerce)	-	industrial clerk
-	-	Clerk in wholesale and foreign trade (Kaufmann/frau im Gross und Aussenhandel)

As can be seen from Table 1 above, there are two categories of clerical occupations which appear to approximate to each other in the three member states. The first of these categories is that of general office work and the two occupations which appear to have an equivalent in all three member states are that of general clerk and that of clerk/typist.

As has been explained in the national monographs there is considerable uncertainty about the long-term future of the employee with only shorthand and typing skills as opposed to the employee with wider and more flexible office training. For this reason, it is considered more sensible to select the general clerk occupation for comparison rather than the less-qualified clerk/typist. The second category of occupation that appears to be similarly defined is the commercial category of bank clerk and insurance clerk. Despite the fact that these sectors are also heavily affected by the introduction of new technology, experts working in the field do not foresee the disappearance of this category of occupation, merely its modification and it would thus seem appropriate to consider it further in terms of approximation of levels. A notable feature of Table 1 is the absence of any occupational equivalent in Germany to the English Figure Clerk and Accounting Technician and the French book-keeper type occupation. This appears to be the result of fundamental differences in the organization of clerical, accounting and administrative work in German companies, U.K. companies and French companies. In fact, in Germany, training for

the three occupations, Office Clerk, Industrial Clerk and Clerk in Wholesale and Foreign Trade all entail an element of book-keeping and accounting. It is thus possible to see that patterns of work organization may vary in this respect between the three countries concerned, book-keeping tasks being assigned to separate personnel in France and the U.K. but included, in Germany, in the wider responsibilities of the Office and Industrial Clerks and the Clerk in Foreign and Wholesale Trade. This question requires further consideration by experts. Differences in work organization in turn may create very considerable problems for the comparison of syllabuses, since e.g. the French B.E.P. in book-keeping is too specialized with respect to book-keeping skills and the German qualifications too broad for meaningful comparison to be possible. The allocation of a broader spectrum of organizational tasks within the German courses of training under consideration also explains why, in Table 1, no occupational equivalence can be found in the U.K. and France for Industrial Clerk, Office Clerk and Clerk in Wholesale and Foreign Trade.

1.4 Courses of training preparing for commercial and clerical occupations in France, Germany and the U.K.

In the three national monographs and in 1.2 above it has been explained that the degree of interdependence of training and access to an occupation varies considerably between the member states under consideration. With this circumstance in mind we can set out the qualifications under consideration in the three member states as follows:-

France	Germany	U.K.
C.A.P. B.E.P.	Berufsabschluss	B.E.C. General and B.E.C. National Certificates and Diplomas and equivalents

The German Berufabschluss differs fundamentally from the English and French qualifications in that it is almost without exception acquired as part of an apprenticeship agreement. Apart from the C.A.P. (Banque), the French qualifications can be acquired without any prior or concurrent work experience. The same is true of the English qualifications, B.E.C. General and National awards.

1.5 Validating and examining bodies for courses of training in France, Germany and the U.K.

In France the Ministry of Education is the validating body for the C.A.P. and the B.E.P. The syllabuses are drawn up and reviewed by a Committee functioning within the Ministry which includes employer and trade union representatives, technical experts and teachers. In Germany, in the case of tertiary sector qualifications, the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs acting with the agreement of the Federal Minister of Education and Science publishes the training regulations for each occupation after consultation with employers' representatives, trade unions and professional bodies. The qualification is awarded after examination by a locally constituted examining board consisting of employer representatives, trade union representatives and teachers. In the U.K. the

Business Education Council (B.E.C.) is an independent body set up by the Secretary of State for Education and Science in 1974 (3). Syllabus planning is carried out by Boards of Study composed of employers' representatives, trade union representatives and teachers. Examinations are composed of externally set and marked elements and internally set and externally moderated elements.

Table 2 gives an indication of the degree of similarity in validation arrangements between the three member states:

Table 2 Degree of participation in establishing syllabuses

		Low	Medium	High
Ministry of Education	F			✓
	G		✓	
	UK	✓		
Employers' representatives	F	✓		
	G			✓
	UK		✓	
Trade union representatives	F	✓		
	G			✓
	UK	✓		
Teachers	F	✓		
	G	✓		
	UK			✓

Table 3 gives an indication of the degree of participation of the various groups in the arrangements for examinations for these qualifications.

Table 3 Degree of participation in examining vocational courses

		Low	Medium	High
Ministry of Education	F			✓
	G	✓		
	UK		✓	
Employers' representatives	F	✓		
	G			✓
	UK	✓		
Trade union representatives	F	✓		
	G			✓
	UK	✓		
Teachers	F			✓
	G		✓	
	UK			✓

It can be seen from Tables 2 and 3 that there are considerable differences between the three member states in the degree of participation by employer, trade union, teacher and government representatives. On the other hand, it can also be noted that all these groups participate to some extent in all member states in the validation of qualifications - a possible basis for future agreement on equivalence.

1.6 The provision of courses of instruction preparing for tertiary sector qualifications in France, Germany and the U.K.

In all three member states, the teaching which takes place outside the employer's premises and which prepares pupils for the qualifications set out in 1.4 above is available free of charge to young people under the age of 18 in publicly provided schools or colleges. In all three member states, the same courses are also provided by privately owned institutions but prepare only a very small proportion of all candidates. The institutions providing courses of instruction are as follows:

France	Germany	U.K.
L.E.P.	Berufsschule	Secondary schools Colleges of F.E. Tertiary Colleges Colleges of Technology

We should note, however, that only in France does the validating and examining body (The Ministry of Education) also provide the institutions and employ the teachers to teach courses of vocational preparation. In Germany, the educational authorities of each Land provide the institution (Berufsschule) and pay the teachers. They also have considerable latitude to design the syllabuses for that part of the Berufsabschluss which is taught in the Berufsschule having regard, nevertheless to the relevant framework curriculum agreed at Federal level between the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry for Economic Affairs. In the U.K., secondary schools, F.E. Colleges, Tertiary Colleges, and Colleges

of Technology are all provided by Local Education Authorities and teachers are employed by these authorities. The schools and colleges in the U.K. teach and examine the syllabuses drawn up by the B.E.C. and other equivalent bodies so that, apart from internally assessed assignments, the teachers in these schools and colleges do not have a great deal of latitude in their teaching of courses leading to commercial and clerical qualifications. With regard to provision and teaching of courses in the three member states, we can therefore see that while all courses are publicly provided, the Ministry of Education in France carries out all the functions of validation, examination and provision whereas in Germany and the U.K. different authorities are responsible for these functions. These differences are probably not particularly relevant to any discussion of equivalence, however.

2. Access to qualifications and duration of courses for initial entrants in France, Germany and the U.K.

2.1 Educational criteria for entry to courses of training leading to commercial and clerical sector qualifications

Member state	Target qualification	Entry requirements
France	C.A.P.	No formal educational requirements. Need not have completed secondary education.
	B.E.P.	Satisfactory completion of four years of secondary education.
Germany	Berufsabschluss	No formal educational requirements. Must have completed five years of secondary education.
U.K.	B.E.C. General Awards	No formal educational requirements. Must have completed five years of secondary education with satisfactory level in English and Maths
	B.E.C. National Awards	B.E.C. General Award with credit OR 4 G.C.E. passes at 'O' level at Grades A, B, or C OR 4 C.S.E. passes Grade 1 OR equivalent

Age of entry

France	C.A.P. B.E.P.	No upper age limit Upper age limit 20
Germany	Berufsabschluss	No upper age limit
U.K.	B.E.C. awards	No upper age limit

The information set out above conveys, in some respects, the letter of the law but not the social reality which obtains at the present time in the various member states with respect to educational requirements and age of entry. In the French monograph it was pointed out the extent to which the C.A.P. and B.E.P. courses are widely recognised by the French authorities as 'second-choice' options for those not considered academically able enough to continue with 'long' secondary education. For this reason, we are unlikely to find that a C.A.P. or B.E.P. candidate has academic achievements at age 15 which would entitle him/her to continue into the 'long' form of secondary education. By contrast, in Germany, as is shown in the national monograph, although there are no formal entry requirements, in the areas under consideration here many of those entering into apprenticeship agreements had academic qualifications which entitled them to continue on to higher education. Furthermore, although the German Law on Vocational Training does not impose an upper age limit on entry into apprenticeship agreements, it is in fact virtually impossible for a mature adult to enter into such an agreement. When we look at the situation in the U.K., we can see emerging more clearly the difference in level between B.E.C. General

and B.E.C. National Awards, both between each other and between other member states concerned. In fact B.E.C. National Awards are the only set of vocational qualifications considered here which require formal examination passes for entry and furthermore at a level (4 or more G.C.E. 'O' level) obtained by, at the most, 30 per cent of any age-cohort[4]. The difference between B.E.C. National awards and the other qualifications under consideration here becomes even more marked if we consider not access to courses leading to the target qualifications but the target qualifications themselves in relation to the hierarchy of academic qualifications. It is useful to express this relationship in terms of the number of years of full-time study required after obtaining the vocational qualification in order to qualify for entrance to higher education. This relationship is shown for the three member states in Table 4 below:

Table 4 Years of full-time study required to qualify for higher education

Member state	Vocational qualification +	No of years study to qualify for higher education
France	C.A.P.	+ 3
	B.E.P.	+ 2
Germany	Berufsabschluss	+ 2 or 4 (-)
U.K.	B.E.C. General	+ 2
	B.E.C. National	+ 0

The implications of this table are that B.E.C. National Awards confer the right to apply for admission to courses of Higher Education in the U.K. While not all Universities would accept B.E.C. National awards, a growing number do, most polytechnics would also do so. When we look at B.E.C. General Awards, at the Berufsabschluss and the B.E.P., however, we can note that all 3 types of qualification require as their de facto entrance criterion the satisfactory completion of the period of compulsory secondary education and that in all 3 member states a further minimum period of two years full-time study is required in order to qualify the student to apply for a course of higher education.

When considering the duration of periods of study required for the completion of vocational qualifications in the member states we shall therefore restrict the discussion to one type of qualification in each member state, those which, on grounds of access from compulsory education and access to higher education appear most similar. The comparison of duration of periods of study in the three member countries is complicated by the fact that

a) in France the B.E.P. is only available on a full-time basis
b) in Germany the Berufsabschluss is only available on a part-time basis
c) in the U.K. the B.E.C. General Awards are available both full and part-time.

These differences constitute the most difficult area for comparison of qualifications. It really does not appear useful to merely compare hours of formal class-room instruction in which comparison France would score highest and Germany lowest since much of what French students are learning in the classroom, German students are

learning during their periods of work within the firm which employs them. The following table indicates the duration of courses of training in the three member states while stressing that the comparison of courses on the basis of duration alone is not a very helpful one.

Table 5 Duration of courses of training

	Qualification	Duration
France	B.E.P.	2 years
Germany	Berufsabschluss	3 years (5)
U.K.	B.E.C. General	
	Diploma full-time	1 year
	part-time	2 years

3. The context of the qualifications: Summary

Sections 1. and 2. of the synthesis report have examined the context of the qualifications available to initial entrants to tertiary sector qualifications in the three member states concerned. To summarize the considerations of the context we can state that:-

1) All the qualifications under consideration are nationally available in publicly-provided institutions.

2) All the qualifications under consideration are validated by nationally-recognised bodies responsible to a government or government departments.

3) All the qualifications under consideration are supervised and validated by bodies on which the following groups are represented:-
government
employers
trade unions and professional bodies
teachers.

4) If we limit this study to the following qualifications, B.E.P. (France), Berufsabschluss (Germany), B.E.C. General Diploma (U.K.) the formal entrance requirements are very similar in the three member states (successful completion of 4 or 5 years' secondary schooling) and the additional preparation period before university entrance can be attempted is also similar in the three member states (2 years).

5) When we examine the duration of courses of training leading to these qualifications we find fundamental differences in organization relating to the provision or non-provision of on-the-job training in addition to the elements of college-based training common to all the courses of training under consideration.

4. The meaning of equivalence or approximation of training levels in the field of tertiary sector employment

4.1 Transferability of technical skills

In other sectors of economic activity where CEDEFOP has successfully worked towards agreement on the approximation of training levels, a

productive approach has been to define equivalence in terms of task-related competence. This is clearly a useful and fruitful approach in sectors where the task which the employee is expected to undertake in the course of his/her work is identical or at least similar regardless of the organizational or national context in which it is performed. Thus, if we take the case of car maintenance and repair, the task of checking the brake fluid level on a given make and model of car is clearly a task which will remain essentially the same from one organizational context to another and from one national context to another.

However, when we consider the tasks which comprise the area of office work it is immediately clear that the 'servicing' of the attainment of organizational objectives of productivity, efficiency and profitability which is in fact what clerical work is concerned with is, even now, only partly determined technologically and that the numerous tasks which make up the occupation of office worker will have been determined by e.g. the traditions of the organization, the sector of economic activity within which the organization is situated, the size of the undertaking, the prior training and experience of management and many other factors. Within national boundaries the skills and tasks required of tertiary sector employees, while they will vary from one type of organization to another, for the reasons given above, will have a degree of transferability, notably basic book-keeping techniques, keyboard and shorthand skills, knowledge of the legal system in its relation to business, etc. However, if we consider the hypothetical case of the trained office worker from e.g. France, even assuming a near-native command of English, coming to the U.K. to take up office work, it is difficult to identify, in the professional training that

worker will have received in France, one technical skill element which could be immediately put to use in an English language context. Keyboarding skills are language specific as are shorthand skills, book-keeping methods vary from one national context to another. We are forced therefore to the conclusion that concentration on task-related competency based on the acquisition of transferable technical skills is not the way forward for equivalence in the field of office work.

4.2 The skills mix required of commercial and clerical employees

In a recent unpublished Manpower Services Commission document examining the development of occupational standards for office-based skills within the U.K., office work was identified as consisting of a number of different tasks which utilise a mix of skills knowledge. In examining the skills mix of organizations, three main classification groups were identified

(i) Technical skills - mainly practical skills which are common in office work and generally practised within lower level jobs.

(ii) Administrative skills - involving the execution of organisational procedures, often requiring more specific job knowledge.

(iii) Inter-personal skills - related to the behavioural aspects of office work, common to all levels of employment.

4.3 Analysis of skills for the purposes of equivalence

In 4.1 it was argued that at present the basic technical skills required of the office employee are not directly transferable[6]. However, experts have given the opinion that there could be a degree of indirect transferability. Understanding of basic principles of e.g. accounting, filing, office organization would

lead to more rapid learning of different systems. This is an area that requires expert discussion and analysis. Similarly, if we take the group of administrative skills then we will find that these are often organization-specific within one national context and that the ability to execute a given administrative task cannot easily be transferred from one national context to another. The third category of skills, inter-personal skills is possibly the only group of the three which can be considered to be directly transferable although even here caution is necessary since the appropriateness of various types of behaviour (formality/informality, understanding of organizational hierarchies) will also vary from one context to another[7].

It therefore appears that we should not try to understand equivalence in connection with commercial and clerical occupations in terms of the certification of directly transferable skills. There is, however, another way of understanding equivalence which is to view it as the certification that the student has attained a similar level of competence in an acceptably similar range of skills relevant to the area of employment in question. As a consequence, the individual would be expected to acquire any new knowledge required rapidly in a short period of training. If this is to be the type of equivalence aimed for then it is clearly appropriate to test its feasibility by a detailed comparison of syllabuses of awards in the three member states. While retaining the fact that skills and associated knowledge are not directly transferable for the conditions of equivalence to be fulfilled it will clearly be necessary to examine whether

a) the range of skills and associated knowledge is sufficiently similar for there to exist a basis for equivalence.

b) the standards attained in the range of skills and associated knowledge is sufficiently similar for there to exist a basis for equivalence.

Clearly, if condition a) is not fulfilled there is no point in proceeding to examine condition b) unless one could confidently expect some change to be made in existing syllabuses. It is probably unwise to proceed on this assumption.

5. Comparison of syllabuses in the commercial and clerical qualifications area, B.E.P., Berufsabschluss and B.E.C. General Diploma

5.1 The choice of syllabuses for comparison

In Section 1. of this summary report it was pointed out that the allocation of responsibilities for different areas of office work appears to vary from one member state to another with the result that occupational specifications and consequently courses of training do not always have counterparts in other member states. Table 1 shows that only 3 occupational areas are similarly defined in the three member states, these are:-

a) General clerk/Office clerk/Correspondence clerk

b) Bank clerk

c) Insurance clerk.

The occupation of office assistant/typist has been excluded for reasons given in Section 1.3. The areas of banking and insurance will be dealt with separately in 6, 7, below so that for the purposes of comparison of syllabuses in the general area of office work we are left with the qualification of General/Office/

Correspondence Clerk. Consequently the comparison of syllabuses in the area of office work will be undertaken for the B.E.P. Sténodactylographe/correspondancière, Berufsabschluss Bürokaufmann/frau, B.E.C. General Diploma with full clerical options.

5.2 Differences in the structuring of the qualifications

Before starting on the comparison, however, further explanation is required in order to explain that we are in fact comparing courses of training with very different structural characteristics. The B.E.P. is a full-time, two-year course of study with no elements of choice once the student has chosen a particular course. The student must study in all the areas of the syllabus and must be examined and pass in all the elements laid down. Although the Ministry of Education has recently made a considerable effort to introduce work experience elements into short technical education, there is no mandatory element of work experience in the B.E.P. qualification, nor is it possible to study for the B.E.P. part-time at a LEP. However, the regulations for the B.E.P. do allow the entry for the examination of mature candidates who should have worked for at least one year in the relevant occupation and who are aged at least 20 years. These candidates, if working full-time would be expected to study by correspondence.

By contrast, much of the Berufsabschluss syllabus is covered while the young person is working under supervision within the firm with which he/she has an apprenticeship agreement. Thus, when comparing elements of syllabuses it must be kept in mind that they may be taught in very different ways in e.g. France and Germany, in France in a formal class-room situation, in Germany 'on the job'.

However, the Berufsabschluss has in common with the B.E.P. the fact that once the speciality has been selected there are no choice elements for the trainee within the course of training. The B.E.C. General Diploma available in England and Wales falls somewhere between the two poles of the B.E.P. and the Berufsabschluss and differs from both in ways which fundamentally affect the task of comparison of syllabuses. Firstly, the B.E.C. General Diploma[8] is available in colleges of Further Education either as a part-time two year course to be taken while the student is in employment or as a full-time one year course of study. If the course is full-time then work experience is usually arranged. At present, (1981-2) 68% of all B.E.C. General Candidates study full-time[9] but the integration of B.E.C. General qualifications into the MSC Youth Training Scheme which begins this year may mean that in future a far higher percentage of B.E.C. General Level students may study part-time on the YTS.

The second characteristic which sets B.E.C. General qualifications apart from its French and German counterparts in its structure of core and option modules and additional cross-modular assignments. While all General Diploma students must take 3 Core Modules, they then chose 5 Option Modules from a total number of 24 possible options. The full range of options are not likely to be offered by all colleges, however. This characteristic of the B.E.C. General courses means that, instead of having to compare a fixed number of elements, it is possible, when making the comparison across member states, to 'construct' a Diploma course to 'fit' the more inflexible German and French syllabuses. However, a further important difference must be considered here in

connection with the B.E.C. qualifications and that is that their syllabuses are formulated in terms of aims and objectives and a series of specified skills, understandings and competences that students are expected to have attained by the end of the module. By contrast, B.E.P. and Berufsabschluss syllabuses are defined in terms of areas of knowledge or topics to be covered . This difference makes comparison of syllabuses more problematic. It would undoubtedly greatly facilitate the prospects of establishing equivalence if the French and German syllabuses could be reformulated in terms of competency-based levels of skill.

5.3 Analysis of elements constituting syllabuses of the B.E.P., Berufsabschluss and B.E.C. General Diploma

The Berufsabschluss has been selected as the starting point for this study because:-

a) the outline syllabus is clearly set out in terms of areas of skill and knowledge to be acquired whereas the B.E.P. is conceived more in terms of various disciplines

b) the B.E.C. is clearly not suitable as a starting point because of the option system.

Where possible, elements from the other qualifications (B.E.P. and B.E.C.) will be set alongside the corresponding elements in the Berufsabschluss. A further continuing list will indicate elements in the other qualifications which do not have any correspondence in the Berufsabschluss.

Bürokaufmann/frau[10] Berufsabschluss	B.E.P.[11] Sténodactylo/ correspondancière B.E.P.	B.E.C. General with clerical options[12]
Care and use of office equipment	Organisation of the Office	Option Module Use of office machines and equipment Clerical Services Option Objectives G, H
Dispatch by post, rail and other means	Office organisation II Correspondence ---------- Organization of Administrative Services	Core Module 3 Objectives H4, H5, H9
Filing	Office Organization 1) Filing	Core Module I Objective G ---------- Core Module 3 Objectives H10, H11
Appointments and deadlines and forward planning of operations	3. Organization of the firm	Option Module Clerical Services Objectives D and E
Different types of filing system	Office Organization 1) Filing	Core Module 1 Objective G ---------- Option Module Clerical Services Objective A

Berufsabschluss	B.E.P.	B.E.C. General
Collection of data and calculation of statistical material	Applied Maths III	Core Module 2 Objectives C, D, E, F
Shorthand and typewriting	Shorthand	Option Modules Typewriting I plus Audio Typewriting
Drafting of correspondence, memos, etc. in appropriate language	Commercial correspondence and language of business	Core Module I 7.2 Objectives A, B, C
Commercial Calculations	Applied Maths II	Module 2 Objectives A, B, C
Control of petty cash account		Option Module Clerical Services Objective F
Methods of payment Procedures for obtaining payment due	Introduction to Accounting III Introduction to Accounting IV Basic activities of the Firm I.	Core Module 3 Objectives H6, H7
Book-keeping	Introduction to Accountancy II	Option Module Book-keeping and Accounts

Berufsabschluss	B.E.P.	B.E.C. General
Costing procedures	-	-
Ordering and stocking of materials (office)	A. Basic Activities of the Firm 1. Commercial operations	Core Module 3 Objectives H1, H2 Option Module Clerical Services Objective B
Basic elements of organization of the firm	Introduction to Accounting I	Core Module I Objective G Core Module 3 Objective E, Objective J1 and Objective F
The calculation of wages	Introduction to Accounting III	Core Module 3 Objective H8 Option Module Clerical Services Objective K
Basic elements of personnel management	Introduction to law and commercial life (labour law)	Core Module I Objectives J1, 2 and H
Basic elements of taxation, insurance and commercial law	Introduction to law and commercial life (more abstract and general than corresponding German and English elements)	Option Module Clerical Services Objective K (tax and N1 only)

Berufsabschluss	B.E.P.	B.E.C. General
Introduction to basic economics	Introduction to the Economy (more extensive than English element)	Core Module 3 Objective C
German	French	Core Module I all objectives
Politics	Understanding of public institutions (more abstract than English element)	Core Module 3 Objectives D, 1, 2, 3, 4, and Objectives A and B
	Organization of offices	Core Module 3 Objective G
	Organization of the firm	Core Module 3 Objective K
	Commercial correspondence and language of business first and second year	Clerical Services Objective C
	Office organization second year VI	Clerical Services Objective J

Berufsabschluss	B.E.P.	B.E.C. General
		Book-keeping and accounts option (goes further than corresponding German element
Religion	Artistic education Family and social life	
Sport	Physical Education Understanding of the contemporary world	
	Study of one foreign language	

From this analysis of the three types of qualification considered we can see that by selecting the options on the B.E.C. General Course of the Clerical Services, Book-keeping and Accounts, Office Typewriting I, Audio Typewriting, and Use of Office Machines and Equipment, substantially the same areas of professional competence are covered in each qualification considered. The only exceptions are that students on the B.E.P. and B.E.C. General are not required to undertake costing as they are in the Berufsabschluss, students on the French B.E.P. are not required to know how to handle a petty cash account. However, in 4.3 (above) Analysis of skills for purposes of equivalence it was considered that two

conditions needed to be fulfilled in order to satisfy a criterion of equivalence

i) that the appropriate areas of professional competence should be covered in each type of qualification

ii) that the standards required of candidates in each type of qualification should be comparable in terms of 'degree of difficulty' of work required.

The comparison of the awards carried out above has established that similar areas of professional competence are covered in each type of qualification. We should now consider the levels of achievement required of candidates for these qualifications in each of the three countries.

5.4 Analysis of levels of achievements in comparable areas of the Berufsabschluss, the B.E.P. and B.E.C. General

The work of analysis in this section of the report is indebted to a study recently carried out at the National Institute of Economic and Social Research[13]. This article compares, among other occupations in Britain and Germany, that of Bürokaufmann/frau considered above in 5.3.

5.4.1 Problems in comparing levels of achievement

It has already been stated that differences between countries in the organization of clerical services make it impossible to compare in detail 'standards of attainment' in many practical areas of professional competence e.g. ordering and stocking of materials except to say that individuals who had clerical qualifications in the three countries would all be capable of carrying out this task in their respective organizations. There would, in fact, seem to be

no point in trying to determine levels of achievement in practical skills which derive from particular modes of organization. Some practical professional skills can be compared, however, notably typewriting, shorthand and audio-typewriting skills, since these are measured in terms of words per minute or other transferable terms of measurement. Unfortunately, as Prais and Wagner also point out, we cannot in fact make this comparison between all three sets of qualifications since the B.E.C. Typewriting modules do not specify skills in terms of w.p.m. but in terms of 'employability' Nor does B.E.C. General level at present include a shorthand module. It is thus impracticable to attempt an evaluation of levels of achievement in the practical professional areas of study. This leaves us with two other elements to examine, firstly, 'broader professional elements' by which is meant e.g. study of the economy or of legal provisions affecting business organizations, secondly 'general educational' elements, the study of arithmetic and mathematics and development of accuracy and powers of expression in the first language plus study of a foreign language. This comparison will not be attempted in tabular form but will be based on impressions and understandings gained from study of syllabuses and examination papers.

5.4.2 Comparison of levels of achievement within 'broad professional elements'

The elements under consideration in this section are:-

B.E.P. Sténodactylographe-correspondancière

Introduction to the economy

Understanding of public institutions

Introduction to law and commercial life

Berufsabschluss Bürokaufmann/frau

Basic elements of taxation, insurance and commercial law

Introduction to basic economics

B.E.C. General

The World of Work Core Module 3

People and Communication Core Module I

Business Calculations Core Module II

First, it should be emphasised that the Berufsabschluss and the B.E.C. General Courses are far more similar in their approach to these elements than the B.E.P. In both the Berufabschluss and B.E.C. General, the knowledge required has obviously been selected having regard to the position of the trainee in the firm and is therefore limited to areas that he/she is likely to encounter in the course of work. Both the Berufsabschluss and B.E.C. General examine these areas by means of written papers. However, having stated that the two examinations are similar in approach it is my firm impression that the German Berufsabschluss examination demands more knowledge and more skill in its application than does B.E.C. General Level. This contention will be illustrated by the following examples from examination papers.

IT IS SUGGESTED THAT YOU SPEND NO MORE THAN 30 MINUTES ON THIS SECTION.

SECTION B- Attached you will find a plan of Wilmorton Town Centre.

In your answers to Task 6 any single organisation may be mentioned more than once.

TASK 6
Study the plan and name, in your answer books, the following:

(a) two Public Limited Companies;
(b) part of a nationalised industry;
(c) two organisations partly or wholly financed by Local Authority rates;
(d) a possible partnership;
(e) those organisations which are likely to have shareholders;
(f) three possible sources of revenue for the Local Authority;
(g) a profession;
(h) a service;
(i) a manufacturer;
(j) a sole trader;
(k) a Central Government Service financed by taxes;
(l) any institutions which would provide you with a loan;
(m) any institutions which would pay interest on money invested;
(n) an organisation which will be directly responsible to a Committee of Councillors;
(o) an organisation which will be directly responsible to a Board of Directors;
(p) an organisation which will be directly responsible to the M.S.C., or in Northern Ireland the D.M.S.;
(q) which organisation will have a Board of Governors.

TASK 7
How might the present state of the economy affect:
(a) the Manufacturer;
(b) the College of Further Education;
(c) the Job Centre, or in Northern Ireland the Employment Service Office?

Final Examination Bürokaufmann/frau

Organization of the firm and correspondence (14)

Question 3 Give five reasons which could lead to a businessman deciding to change from being self-employed to starting a private company.

Question 4 Explain

a) Unemployment benefit

b) Unemployment assistance

c) Short-working payments.

Question 5 Explain

a) Line organization

b) Functional organization.

These questions to be completed in approximately 35 minutes.

When we consider the B.E.P. in the 3 subjects noted above we should first note that the examination is an oral one, 15 minutes for Understanding of public institutions and 15 minutes for the other two areas. The syllabus, on the other hand for Introduction to the economy is both general and includes a large number of fairly high-level concepts, - circulation of goods and money, national product, demand and consumption. The same can be said of the other two subjects under this heading. We must therefore conclude, on 'broad professional elements' that the applied approach of the German and English courses is similar but that the intellectual skills demanded of the German candidates are more complex than those demanded of B.E.C. General candidates - although the degree of difference is not great . The French B.E.P. elements are more theoretical and comparison is difficult because of the method of examining (oral).

5.4.3 Comparison of 'general education elements'

By this is understood the study of arithmetic/mathematics, mother tongue and first foreign language. All the certificates considered also involve applied business calculations. The B.E.P. syllabus includes some algebra but as this element is not examined it is difficult to assess the degree of competence attained by the French students. When we compare the examination papers in business calculations of the Berufsabschluss Bürokaufmann and the B.E.C. General we find that the level of mathematical operations required of the candidates is fairly similar, that is that they are limited to four rules of arithmetic plus an understanding of decimals, percentages, averages and means, used in a business context.

However, when we compare the two papers, Rechnen in the Berufsabschluss and Business Calculations in B.E.C. General we find some important differences, notably the speed of work required of candidates. The Berufsabschluss candidate must answer 12 fairly complex problems in one hour without the use of a calculator. B.E.C. General candidates have two hours to answer 15 questions of which 10 are simple calculations e.g. converting lbs to kilograms. They are also allowed to use a calculator. We must therefore conclude that the level of complexity of calculations required of Berufsabschluss candidates is higher that that required of B.E.C. General students and that they are required to perform these operations more quickly. When we look at the teaching of French, German and English (mother tongue) we can again note considerable similarity of approach between the Berufsabschluss and B.E.C. General. Both require the student to be familiar only with the register of business transactions and the written work required takes the form

of memoranda and/or business letters. There is considerable similarity between the two qualifications in the degree of difficulty of the papers in German and English respectively. However, when we examine the French syllabus and examinations for the B.E.P. we find that, in addition to learning to write business letters, French students study French literature and that the examination is an explication de texte taken from a work of contemporary fiction. It is difficult to compare this with the German and English examinations. The B.E.P. is the only qualification considered to require a foreign language to be learnt but examination in this area is optional.

5.4.4 Conclusions on comparison of levels of achievement

For the German and English qualifications the conclusion is the same as that reached by Prais and Wagner, namely that while the approach in each area is similar and comparable, the Berufsabschluss candidates are required to work more quickly and at a higher level of cognitive complexity than B.E.C. General candidates. Nevertheless, as Prais and Wagner point out, we are limited by not knowing the effective level of achievement required for a pass in the two countries. Prais and Wagner consider that B.E.C. General with full clerical options equates with the German Bürogehilfin (office assistant), a two-year training not seriously considered in this study since it is actively under revision and unlikely to survive in its present form. The work carried out in this section on levels of achievement agrees broadly with Prais and Wagner that B.E.C. General level lies below that of the Berufsabschluss, not in the scope of studies but in level of difficulty. B.E.C. National has not been considered here for reasons given in par. 1.6 but it is

clear, and this is also agreed by Prais and Wagner, that the standard of the Berufsabschluss Bürokaufmann lies somewhere between that of B.E.C. General and B.E.C. National. I would not be prepared to go quite as far as Prais and Wagner and say that ' the course for the German Bürokaufmann is probably comparable to the B.E.C. National Certificate', since, for example, the compulsory mathematics and accounting module in B.E.C. National is considerably more complex than that for Bürokaufmann.

When we come to the B.E.P. we see that the approach of the B.E.P. syllabus is unlike that of the German and English qualifications. Although, as has been seen from the analysis in par. 5.3, the B.E.P. covers the same practical elements as the German and English qualifications, the 'broader professional elements' are approached as an abstract body of knowledge and more general skills in the use of the French language are required. Modes of examination also differ from the German and English models. Another obstacle to direct comparability is that there is no examination in mathematics although the standard of the syllabus appears similar to that of the Berufsabschluss. If differences of approaches can be set aside, the overall standard of the B.E.P. is probably as high if not higher than that of the Berufsabschluss and more demanding than B.E.C. General. This assertion is only of limited use, however, since we must remember that a B.E.P. student may have had no practical experience of a working environment, unlike the Berufsabschluss candidate.

5.5 Conclusions on overall equivalence: scope of studies and levels of equivalence

From the analysis undertaken in 5.3 we could see that the scope of

the three qualifications for office/clerical worker is very similar in the three countries, although the 'transfer value' of the skills acquired is probably fairly limited (4.3). However, when we examine levels of achievement in 'broader professional elements' and in 'general educational elements', we find that the B.E.C. General awards demand a less complex achievement than the Berufsabschluss and that the French B.E.P. approaches and examines these areas in a way so different from the English and German qualifications as to make comparability very difficult. (5.4.3).

6. Initial entrants to banking in France, Germany and the U.K.

6.1 Combinations of on-the-job and off-the-job training

In all three member states initial entrants to bank employment are trained on-the-job usually by working under supervision in a variety of departments. The U.K. is the only member-state of the three where the entrant is not required to follow a formal course of training in addition to on-the-job training. However, if the U.K. initial entrant does decide to follow a course, he/she may or may not be given day release for study. The qualification usually taken by initial entrants to U.K. banking is the B.E.C. National Certificate with full banking options which gives exemption from the Institute of Bankers examinations Stage I. In Germany the Berufsabschluss Bankkaufmann/frau has the same characteristics as the Berufsabschluss Bürokaufmann and will be a condition of acceptance into banking employment. In France, all initial entrants to banking are required to obtain a C.A.P. (Banking) which is usually taught during working hours.

6.2 Differences in the level of qualifications offered

The problem posed by the qualifications proposed to initial entrants in the three member states is that within the context of vocational qualifications the French C.A.P. is ranked as a first level vocational qualification, below the B.E.P. which, it has already been noted, is the most suitable qualification for comparison with the Berufsabschluss. The B.E.P. National Certificate, on the other hand, as was pointed out in section 5.4.4., is probably a more demanding course than the Berufsabschluss and certainly has more 'value' on the academic market since the holder is entitled to apply for certain courses of higher education. We are thus confronted by a situation where the qualifications offered to initial entrants to banking differ radically in degree of difficulty for the candidate.

6.3 Other conditions of comparability

In two other respects, however, that of on-the-job training and entrance qualifications, there is a degree of similarity between member-states in the banking sector. In all three member-states, employees are likely to be working within the profession on a formally supervised training programme while obtaining their qualifications and secondly a high percentage of entrants in all three countries now have 'A' level type qualifications. However it is difficult, given the disparity in the levels of first qualifications available in the three countries, to see how progress on equivalence can be made. The introduction of a qualification between B.E.C. General and B.E.C. National in the U.K. would make for close equivalence with the Berufsabschluss in Germany. The level and content of the French C.A.P. would then

have to be carefully examined, but it is doubtful whether it could be considered equivalent to the Berufsabschluss.

7. Initial entrants to insurance in France, Germany and the U.K.

7.1 Levels of qualification required

The situation in insurance is similar to that in banking, in that the most common initial qualifications are the C.A.P. in France, the Berufsabschluss in Germany and B.E.C. National Awards in England. These are usually all studied while already in employment.

7.2 Consideration of the French B.P. (Brevet Professionnel) in the banking and insurance sectors

One way to approach the disparity in levels of qualifications between member-states in these three sectors is to compare another qualification available to those already in banking and insurance employment, the Brevet Professionnel (B.P.). This qualification takes two years part-time (identical to B.E.C. National Certificate) and although primarily a professional qualification is recognised as being of the same level as the Baccalauréat. However, if the B.P. and B.E.C. National could be recognised as equivalent there might then be problems with the Berufsabschluss. Further discussion in this area is clearly needed, but these sectors have the advantage of having in common a period of on-the-job training for employees in all three countries.

8. Conclusions and recommendations on the feasibility of attempting to establish equivalence of qualification in commercial and clerical occupations

8.1 The need to recognise the principle of compensation

As the main qualifications stand at present they are clearly not equivalent enough although, as has been pointed out (par. 5.5) these differences in the qualifications analysed are more differences of level than scope of qualifications. What would be required would be for e.g the greater complexibility of the Book-keeping and Accounts option in the B.E.C. General Diploma to compensate for the lack of complexity in Business Calculations relative to the Berufsabschluss. The B.E.P. appears to cover Organization of the Firm more thoroughly than the Berufsabschluss and this could also be used where compensation is required. If such a principle could be accepted and made to work then progress could probably be made on formal recognition.

8.2 The problem of on-the-job training

On-the-job training forms an integral part of the German Berufsabschluss and is systematically recorded and marked. Clearly, there can be no recognition of equivalence to the Berufsabschluss unless the French and English qualifications can be complemented by a similarly structured and supervised period of work experience. It has already been noted that the YTS Scheme in the U.K. has introduced structured, monitored work experience and, independently of YTS, the MSC in the U.K. is working towards the establishment and recognition of nationally recognised standards of basic commercial and clerical training including the assessment of job skills. This indicates that U.K. clerical employees may at some time in the future be able to produce records of training while in employment. If a similar development were to take place in France, then a basis for agreement might be:-

France	Germany	U.K.
B.E.P. + 2 years on the job training	Berufsabschluss	B.E.C. General Diploma + 2 years on the job training

8.3 The feasibility of establishing equivalence of qualifications in commercial and clerical occupations

The feasibility of establishing equivalence will clearly depend on the willingness of the validating authorities to

a) allow the principle of compensation

b) introduce (in the case of France and the U.K.) a monitored and more structured form of on the job training.

The main problems to be resolved in this area have been identified not so much as arising from the institutional context of the qualifications or from the educational levels which they formally represent (3.), but from differences in levels of achievement of students in key areas of general education within the different qualifications (5.5). These differences have their origins in the level of achievement of pupils during their compulsory schooling, with the English pupils starting their courses of vocational training from a lower level of mathematics achievement than their German and possibly their French counterparts[15]. If, as one may hope and even expect, given the degree of disquiet in England over standards of mathematics in schools, action is taken to improve levels of attainment in the schools then this problem could be eliminated. However, such action is not, at present projected, and if taken will not result immediately in a substantial improvement[16].

However, it would be wrong to overestimate the importance of this particular disparity. English students are capable of carrying out the same sort of business calculations as German and French pupils only more slowly and coping with fewer variables at any one time. The most important consideration when it is a question of the equivalence of vocational qualifications must be the scope and standard of professional/vocational training and this has proved to be closely similar in the three countries. Perhaps one problem here is that the French B.E.P. does not focus all its work on the world of business as do the German and English qualifications. Another difference is that B.E.C. courses are defined in terms of competencies and skills rather than knowledge to be acquired but it may be hoped that in this case French and German qualifications may be reformulated to conform to the English model.

Recommendations

1. That soundings of opinion should be made in the three member states to ascertain attitudes in the key areas of compensation and structured, and monitored on-the-job training.

2. That if initial reaction to these two principles is favourable, an expert evaluation of syllabuses in selected areas should be undertaken.

3. That if expert opinion supports the conclusions of this study concerning the broad equivalence of professional training in selected areas, the relevant authorities should discuss the feasibility of introducing in France and England monitored on the job training in selected fields.

4. That a successful outcome of discussions under 1), 2) and 3) above could form a solid foundation for action on equivalence which could then be extended to other member states.

SUMMARY/SYNTHESIS REPORT

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1 The exception in France seems to be the C.A.P. (Banque) which is now only available to young people already working in banking.

2 In Germany, secretary is not an occupation for which a young person may train. It is usual to train as office assistant or office clerk before taking further qualifications to become a secretary.

3 While this study was in preparation, B.E.C. merged with T.E.C (Technician Education Council) to become B/TEC.

4 Calculation based on D.E.S. Statistical Bulletin 1/83 Table 2.

5 2 years for entry to Specialized Higher Education.
4 years for entry to General Higher Education.

6 With the exception of office assistant which is a two year course.

7 It is, for example, possible for all the office staff in e.g. a University Department in the U.K. to be on first-name terms with all members of academic staff, including professors. In Germany and France this would be unlikely.

8 The B.E.C. General Certificate is not considered here since, as it is a one-year part-time qualification it really does not appear comparable on grounds of duration and breadth of study.

9 B.E.C. Annual Report 1981-2.

10 From W. Bertelsmann Verlag, K G Bielefeld, Berufsbild, Berufsbildungsplan, Prüfungsanforderungen Bürokaufmann and Nordrhein Westfalen Kultusminister Lehrpläne für kaufmännische Berufschulen.

11 Ministere de l'Education Nationale Collection: Horaires/ Objectifs/Programmes/Instructions
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12 B.E.C. B.E.C. General Awards
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13 Prais S.J., Wagner K. Some Practical Aspects of Human Capital Investment: Training Standards in Five Occupations in Britain and Germany National Institute Economic Review August 1983.

14 Taken from papers set by the Combined Chambers of Commerce and Industry of North-Rhine Westfalia Summer 1983.

15 I base this assertion on further work by Prais, S.J. and Wagner, K. Schooling Standards in Britain and Germany: Some Summary Comparisons Bearing on Economic Efficiency National Institute of Economic and Social Research Discussion Paper no.60. I broadly agree with the conclusions of this paper, that the achievements of the lower half of the ability range in Germany are higher in mathematics than the achievements of the corresponding 40% in England. The compulsory mathematics paper for e.g. the B.E.P. agent de commerce (commercial clerk) are also of a higher standard than the English papers.

16 Since this report was written, the Secretary of State for Education has publicly announced proposals for improving levels of attainment in mathematics of the lower half of the ability range in England and Wales.

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